

転生したら 剣でした

"I became the sword by transmigrating"
Story by Yiu Tanaka, Illustration by Ito

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I WAS A SWORD WHEN I REINCARNATED

- Tensei Shitara Ken Deshita -

- Volume 1 -

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[Translated by: Dijoninpieces]

- SYNOPSIS -

When I noticed it, I was in a different world.

I had become a sword... what, I don't get it! The place I woke up was a great plain crowded with monsters. I fly in search of a partner (women only) to be equipped with. Magic stone? I get the skills I absorb? This has become fun!
Hyahha, give me magic stones! Yes, that was a joke. But I'll take a magic stone.

This is how I became a sword and went to another world, a story of an ordinary minor character otaku.



“보고를 듣죠.”

“아아. 크랄 파티와 함께 현장으로 향했는데,
거기서 프란 씨를 만났소.”

“전투는 이미 끝난 뒤였습니다.”

“그렇습니까.”

그럼 프란 씨에게 듣고 싶군요……”

길드 마스터가 가볍게 한숨을 쉬었다.

프란이 말수가 적다는 사실을

알기 때문일 것이다.

어떻게 이야기를 시킬까 걱정하는 얼굴이었다.

뭐, 사태가 꽤나 긴박한 거 같으니

여기서는 내가 거들어줄까.

원래 인간이었던 검

스승

고양이 귀 소녀
프란

길드 마스터
클림트



PROLOGUE

The first thing I thought when I opened my eyes was that it was dark.

What's going on? Is it night time?

But the very next moment, I felt that there was light coming from my left.

I shifted my sight to the left, as if being led by the light.

And I saw before my eyes an incredibly beautiful sight.

Below a dimly lit sky was a vast horizon. The light was shining from over the edge like a halo.

The sun was beginning its ascent. The rising sun, shining like a rainbow, even made me feel deep emotion at its beauty.

Then what could be on my other side?

I shifted my sight to the right. On this side, the moon was descending below the horizon.

The full moon's silver light was bright to a shocking degree. Though the top of the moon had already begun to disappear beneath the horizon, I could tell even at a glance the moon's bright light.

It was an overwhelming sight.

There was no other scene in my thirty years of life that was as beautiful as this. A scene so beautiful that it would be strange not to shed a tear.

No, wait. My thirty years of life? Am I alive right now? No, did I die?

The last thing I remember was a red convertible speeding towards me like a bullet. The reckless driver was holding a smartphone in one hand while looking away from the road, laughing boisterously.

Yes, it seems, good sir, you are busy doing something else while driving. It seems you are having quite the good time, laughing so happily. Well I'm not having any fun at all you goddamn retard!

I remember shouting those words in my head, but...

I probably died. No, I'm dead, aren't I?

[Hmm. What happened...?]

[Look at that. Have you finally opened your eyes?]

[Uwa! Who is that?!]

I heard an unexpected voice ring around me. But it didn't seem like anyone was near me.

No, it actually seems like I heard that voice in my head?

[You have a tough road ahead of you, but do your best.]

[Huh? What do you mean?]

[All right then. See you later—.]

And thus, the man's voice disappeared.

[What? Hello?]

I spoke out, but there was no answer. What in the world just happened? Did I have an auditory hallucination? But I heard it so clearly...

And I only noticed something after I tried to move my body in an attempt to look around at my surroundings.

My body wasn't moving.

[Huh? What's going on? No, what happened to me?]

I was afraid I was tied up, but the situation wasn't as simple as that.

My body felt strange. I didn't feel anything from my hands or feet. No, not just my hands and feet; I felt strange everywhere.

[I don't have eyelids, either. And my eyes are... I can't feel anything from my eyes, but how am I able to see?]

I looked down at my body. I felt uneasy, but I was able to shift my gaze a little.

[...I'm a sword.]

I saw a sword stuck in a pedestal.

I have no idea how, but I was able to casually understand that that sword was in fact my body.

Though this situation was beyond anything I could understand.

But I could understand that there was no doubt that that sword was me.

My eyes—or whatever was acting as my eyes—were located below the blade. It seems they are between the blade and the hilt. How can I see if I'm a sword? I formed a question.

[Did I die...then reincarnate as a sword?]

That sounds like a fantastical light novel I saw somewhere before.

I wanted to believe this was a dream, but with this body, I couldn't even pinch my cheek.

[Moving on, I can feel things? It's kind of like back in my previous body.]

I understood that my blade was lodged in a pedestal. Though the sensation was different from in my original body, I could sense that something was touching me.

[Am I really in a different world?]

At the very least, I wasn't on Earth any more.

I knew that because of the moons high in the sky. Looking straight up, I saw not just one, but six moons, colored red, blue, green, purple, yellow, and pink, that glowed dimly in the sky.

CHAPTER 1

LONE SWORD IN A FIELD

Even while I was shocked at the completely foreign vista before me, I began to look over my situation.

[After all, in all those isekai light novels, wouldn't I usually get some kind of cheat ability.]

Can I even equip skills when I've reincarnated as a sword? Just my reincarnating as a sword can't be considered a cheat, right? No, thinking that there'd be such a convenient development as me having a cheat ability is foolish to begin with.

[The usual cheat after reincarnation is Appraisal... No way, it really showed up?]

A convenient development seems to have just occurred.

I was able to thoroughly check my status.

Name: Unknown

Registered Wielder: None

Race: Intelligence Weapon

Attack: 132 MP: 200/200 Durability: 100/100

Class <Rank 1>

Skills: Appraisal 6, Self-recovery, Telekinesis, Telepathy, Wielder Stat Boost [small], Wielder Recovery Boost [small], Skill Sharing, Magic User

I was amazed. I checked to see if I could get information on these skills individually.

Appraisal 6: Displays information about what the user sees.

Self-recovery: Heals itself from damage. Restoration is possible as long as the weapon is not fully destroyed.

Telekinesis: Able to move objects with magic.

Telepathy: Able to communicate mentally with others through magic.

Wielder Stat Boost [small]: Gives a slight boost to all of the wielder's stats.

Wielder Recovery Boost [small]: Slightly increases the wielder's natural and magical restoration.

Magic User: Can sense the flow of magic. Proof of the ability to use magic.

It seemed like the number at the end of the skill was its level. If it was 6 already, does that mean I'm actually pretty amazing? No, the maximum could be 999 so maybe it's too early to celebrate?

But at the very least, I wasn't a normal weapon. There were a few items and skills I couldn't make heads or tails of, but I could understand how amazing I was. With these abilities, I could even be classified as a Rare Weapon or a Unique Weapon.

But my name is unknown? Is my Appraisal level too low? Or did I never have one to begin with? It'd be strange to give a sword my name—. Wait. My name? What was my name again? Huh? I seriously can't remember it. What?

[Hmm... I can't remember it at all.]

Though I can remember other things.

I'm 30 years old. A man. A salary man. Single. My hobbies are anime, manga, VRMMO, and reading (light novels only). I've been told many times that I have a nice personality. I like curry and there're no foods I dislike. I don't have a girlfriend. No, I've never dated a girl.

[I feel depressed for some reason...]

Well, I have other memories so I should remember it soon. Considering I'm a human that reincarnated as a sword, it isn't strange that there's a gap or two in my memory.

There's nothing I can do about my memory so I decided to set that aside for now.

Next, I should check my appearance.

Inlaid within the mysterious blade that shined with white light were three blue lines;

it was beautiful. It was in the shape of the so-called longsword.

Beneath the pale gold hilt were a sculpture of a courageous wolf and a decorative blue string. The handle was wound with a latticework of blue and white strings.

This may be self-praise, but I was clearly not just a simple tool. This sword must be incredibly expensive.

However, I had no way of knowing how strong an attack value of 132 was. It wasn't impossible that a flamboyant rich guy had this sword made as an overly decorated conversation piece. Though I don't think that is likely considering the skills I have.

If that were true, then it'd be the worst-case scenario. If I'm just some rich guy's sword, then I should throw myself into a furnace and kill myself (?).

But I really am a fancy sword. It looked like a mystical sword that would show up near the end of an RPG.

[But I really am a sword.]

I gave a mental sigh.

I wasn't a handsome man in my previous life. Though neither was I a shockingly ugly person. Well, I was basically the most typical of typical otaku. So, I felt no lingering attachment for my previous body. I didn't have any particular complaints about being reincarnated into a different body. Because I actually had high hopes for my body when I reincarnated.

But not as a sword. A sword.

I can't eat or play video games like this. Nor lose my virginity.

Th—that's right. I'm a wizard! (*tn: there is a Japanese saying that men who are still virgins at the age of 30 become wizards*) This is my cross to bear for the rest of my life.

[.....]

This is hopeless. If I still had hands and feet, I'd have kowtowed in despair.

Wait, is that what that skill, Magic User, means? Come to think of it, I felt like that skill had a different feel to it than the others... Don't screw with me! It's not funny!

Even I had no idea how long I spent lamenting my situation. It could've been five minutes or maybe even an hour. I spaced out for a bit and it seems like I'm becoming stupider by the minute.

[I'm a sword now so isn't there no need to think about that stuff? Because either way, I'm a sword.]

This isn't me trying to escape reality. It's really not.

Besides, if I hadn't reincarnated then I clearly would've stayed dead back there.

Thinking about it again, maybe my luck was actually pretty good. Because even though I likely died, my consciousness is still with me.

That's right. Not everyone can experience being a sword. Maybe it wouldn't be such a bad idea to try and enjoy it.

After I thought that, I felt relief wash over me.

I unexpectedly got a second life. No, a sword-life. It might even be a good idea to aim for the peak as a sword.

But what's the peak for a sword? Well, if I don't find someone to wield me then this story's over before it's even begun. For example, a hero? But since the hero's sword will have to battle against a Demon Lord and that stuff, it'll probably be tough. In some cases, a hero's sword has been known to break. And that's when a legendary blacksmith (a dwarf) would fix his sword. Besides, a hero would probably be super serious, righteous, and jaw dropingly handsome. In other words, the exact opposite of me. I don't think I could truly get along with someone like that.

I'll be happy as long as a girl wields me. A cute one would be ideal, but anyone will do as long as she's not ugly. That's a whole lot better than some hero with muscles for brains.

And the last thing is her skills. A heroine who can use me to slice her enemies to shreds

with ease and gain renown. And that beloved sword would be recorded centuries later in a library.

...I mean, this is just my dream so I'm free to say whatever I want. Isn't it harmless to dream big?

The problem right now is escaping from this plain.

I can't hear that man's voice no matter how hard I tried so I should stop thinking about it.

Then I guess I should look at what's around me and check my situation.

I was located in a what looked like dilapidated ruins. There was no roof and I was in a large empty field. In the middle of that large space was the pedestal that I was in, stuck in there like a treasured sword, and along the outside of the pedestal were what looked like shrines. I could tell not by the growing moss, but by the respectable trees that grew out of the cracks in the shrines' roofs that this place had been forgotten and neglected for a very long time.

Is that where I am? The place where someone comes here to pick up a legendary weapon? But contrary to that idea, this place didn't feel like a dungeon.

I was unable to look behind me because the pedestal stopped my body from turning. But after looking around, all I saw was a forest filled solely with short trees and the connected plain that similarly had no large trees.

Concentrating on a spot, I saw a shadow moving occasionally. Could it be an animal?

[I don't see a single person.]

Am I unable to move by myself?

No wait. One of my skills was definitely telekinesis. Can I use that to move?

[Hm.]

Concentrate. Telekinesis, telekinesis.

I felt my body suddenly become lighter.

I felt the blade move ever so slightly away from the pedestal.

Savoring that feeling, I imagined the sword flying towards the sky.

[Yeees! I'm floating!]

I was able to move freely by using my imagination. Having escaped the confines of the pedestal, I flew through the air.

[I CAN FLY!]

I wasn't going much faster, but this was enough for now. Because I found out that I can move on my own.

I scanned the area around the pedestal. It really did look like ruins.

There must have originally been grey, brick-like blocks gathered together.

But due to extended exposure to the elements, the colors became darker and moss grew all over the place.

The place was about 30 meters in diameter.

[Who in the world made this place? It seems like that person is my maker...]

Does the fact that this place looks so old mean that I was actually alone for that entire time?

It's unlikely that a sword, even one that I reincarnated into, would just pop up out of nowhere in this abandoned place. Someone, a human, must have made my body. Well, that is to say as long as I didn't get turned into a sword by a certain accident.

My prime candidate would be my maker, but if he's dead then that possibility is gone.

However, there was no moss or dirt on me nor the cloth that decorated the pedestal that I was in before. As if we were placed there less than a day ago.

Then is my maker still alive?

[Hmmm?]

While I was observing the area and mulling things over, I felt something wrong with my body.

[...Huh?]

I felt so tired... The feeling of fatigue overtook my body.

And then I was falling.

[Oh crap!]

I frantically tried to use telekinesis but there was no response.

I was about 30 meters up now.

[Float! C'mon, I'm telling you to float!]

But my struggles were in vain as I slammed into the ground at high speed.

KLAAAANG!

The sound of metal rang loudly.

[That hur—...that didn't hurt at all, but am I broken anywhere? Or are there any cracks or anything.]

I quickly looked myself over but everything looked okay.

I even felt okay.

For me to be totally okay even after falling from so high up, maybe I really am an excellent sword.

[But why did I fall?]

After that inexplicable fatigue, I wasn't able to use Telekinesis anymore.

I checked my status to find the cause.

I was able to figure out the cause right away.

[I drained all my mana.]

It said MP: 0/200. Using Telekinesis must have kept using up mana.

This must also have been the cause of my fatigue.

Is the fact that I didn't lose consciousness after I drained all my mana a blessing in and of itself?

[So I can't fly for even five minutes. It was more like three.]

I waited for a while on top of the stone path.

My mana began to recover slightly. I felt mana gathering inside me little by little. It was like I was absorbing mana from the air while I was unconscious.

I counted the time in my head as I waited, and it seemed like 1 minute meant 1 point recovered.

I waited for an hour and after I recovered 60 points, I used Telekinesis again.

[Great. I'm floating.]

It didn't look like there were any problems. I checked my status while like this. My mana was slowly being drained.

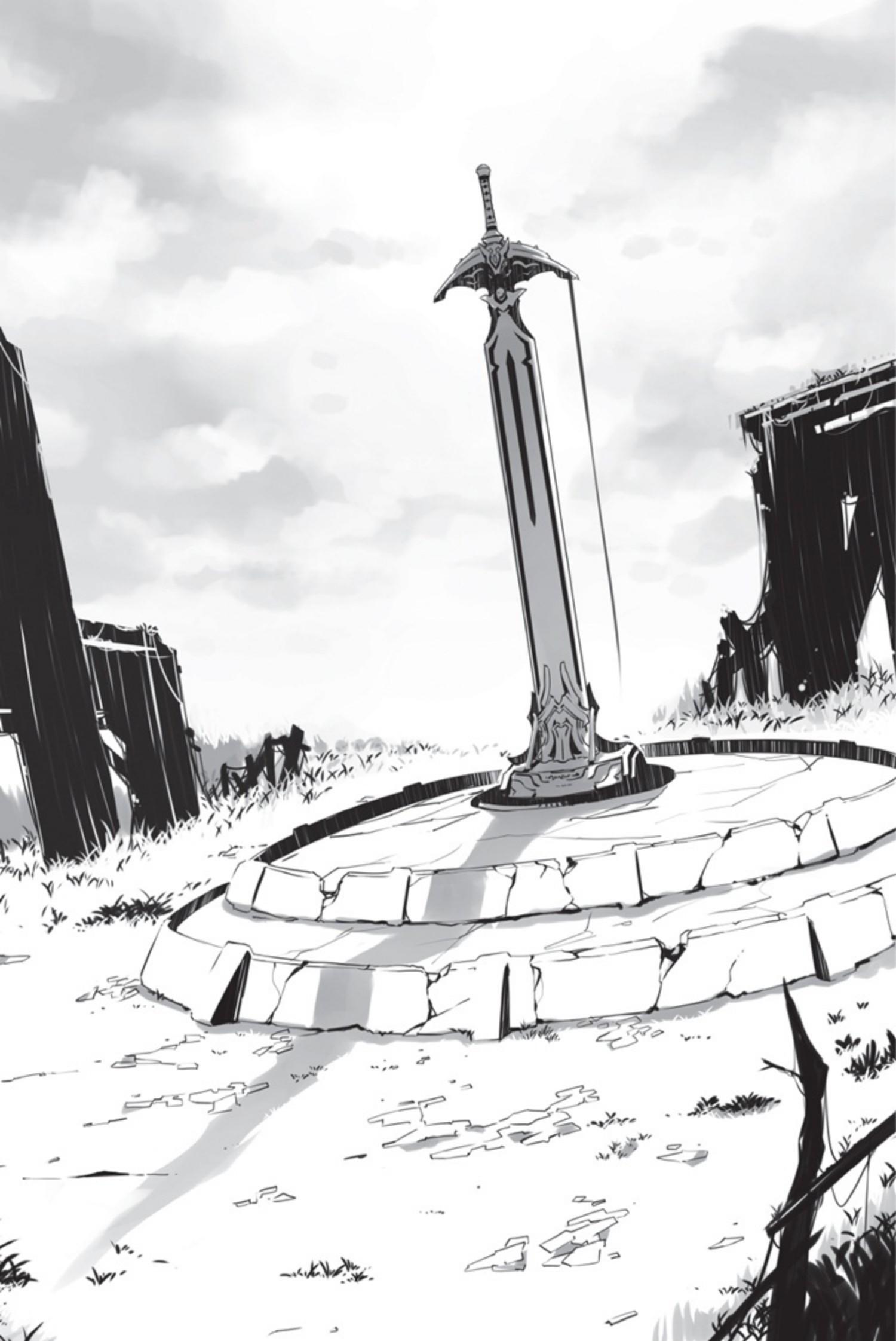
[So Telekinesis costs 1 mana per second? Then that means with 200 mana, I can keep this up for 3 minutes.]

I'll probably get annoyed at constantly falling to the ground.

Before my mana could fall further, I quickly returned to the pedestal.

Having placed my body within the pedestal again, I felt strangely relieved.

[Phew, I'm back.]



But I realized that with the constraint of my mana, it was dangerous to travel far.

I decided to avoid leaving the pedestal for the time being and spent some time observing the plain that I was in.

Looking over the plain, I saw a diversity of life.

I had originally thought that this place would only have mammals like the African savannah, but there were a large variety of insects and other creatures as well. And they were remarkably large.

For example, an ant-like insect I first found was the size of a large dog. Of course, there were bats as well. Though they were definitely huge.

It was a relief that I was a sword. At the very least, it was unlikely that I'd be attacked by something looking for prey.

[This definitely isn't Earth.]

Looking farther away, I saw even larger beasts.

From what I could see, I estimated that it was almost ten meters long.

It was bigger than an elephant.

[Is that a so-called demonic beast?]

A sudden realization hit me as I was watching them.

[Will humans even come here when there are such huge demonic beasts?]

I still saw no humans.

Second day of being reincarnated.

Something approached me.

The sound of footsteps grew louder as something came towards the pedestal from behind. There were more than one.

“Gehegehahu.”

“Agyagyu.”

“Gegya!”

Is that language? Are they talking with each other? I had no idea what they were saying, but I got the feeling that they were communicating.

Their voices reminded me of monkeys.

I heard them come closer. Now they were right behind me.

Great, come closer. Then I can see what they look like.

Step step.

A little more.

Step step step.

Just one meter to go.

Step steeeeep.

Shit. They stopped right behind me.

“Gyagyu?”

“Gyarugaga.”

“Gyan Ga?”

“Garuha~.”

What? What are they saying? It sounds like they’re discussing something...

And then something touched my handle.

Whatever it was, it gripped my handle. Though it felt very rough, it also felt similar to a human hand.

It was clearly trying to pull me out of the pedestal.

Though, for some reason, I felt strangely resistant to the idea of some unknown thing pulling me out.

Though I don't really care if I see what it is only after it pulls me out...

For no particular reason, I kept myself in place by using Telekinesis.

Perhaps refusing to give in, it tried even harder to pull me out.

But it was useless. I used Telekinesis with all my might. As if it could pull me out.

“Gya nya!”

“Gyugagaga...!”

“Hagahahu!”

Its comrades started shouting as if cheering it on. And it seemed like they were circling around the one trying to pull me out.

“Gyaruga!”

“Gorugyaru!”

Thanks to their movements, I got a good look at them.

Are they real?

Green skin. An ugly face even more brutal than a gorilla's. They had horns sprouting out of their heads, animal hides over their body, and clubs in their hands.

[G-goblins?]

That's right. They were goblins.

Goblins were the ones trying to pull me out.

Wait, wait, not goblins! That's just not right! If I become a goblin's magic sword then it's all over for me. It might have been okay if it was at least the Goblin King, but they're clearly plain mob goblins.

I checked their status while continuing to counteract their pulling with Telekinesis.

Name: Goblin

Race: Demon

Lv: 5

HP: 17 MP: 6 Strength: 8 Agility: 12

Skills: Club Wielding 1, Digging 2

Name: Goblin

Race: Demon

Lv: 5

HP: 19 MP: 4 Strength: 9 Agility: 10

Skills: Sword Wielding 1, Alert 1, Poison Resistance 1

Would you look at that? They have subtle differences even though they're the same race.

Well, of course that's the case. If their weapons are different, then their specialties should be different as well.

Another one came into my view as it continually failed to pull me out, allowing me to appraise it.

Name: Goblin Leader

Race: Demon

Lv: 2

HP: 24 MP: 6 Strength: 11 Agility: 13

Skills: Sword Wielding 1, Survival 1, Dismantling 2, Command 1

Whoa, this guy's a Goblin Leader. Is its level low because it evolved? Well, it's a little strong. Just a little though.

What should I do?

They didn't look like they had plans on leaving any time soon. They started to hit me in an effort to pull me out.

One of them seemed to have given up because another one took its place.

A different one was probably in my blind spot, but it grabbed me. It emoted with a "Hun Nugaga—" which sounded labored to me as it tried with all its might to pull me out.

I resisted its pulling with all my strength.

Having realized that strength alone was not enough, the leader borrowed a club from one of its comrades and began striking the pedestal. It was trying to break the pedestal so as to lay hands upon me. But it didn't do a single bit of damage to the pedestal. That seemed to have made it more impatient and angrier. Rage flooded the leader's face and I couldn't tell if it was trying to pull me out or just taking out its anger on an inanimate object.

Then again, it's a goblin. Everything it did was dumb as bricks.

The goblin raged against the pedestal for a while until it decided to kick it.

But the pedestal must have been harder than it thought. Having stubbed its toe, it started leaping up into the air in comical fashion.

Hahaha. Serves you right.

The fully enraged leader threw its club to one of the goblins I couldn't see. C'mon man, don't take out your frustration on your comrade. As I was thinking that, the goblin, to my surprise, spat on me.

I was able to feel that disgusting spit on my blade.

Gross! So gross! It feels disgusting! It was also humiliating.

Great, I get it now. This is war. Enough.

My temper was strangely flaring up on its own.

My first target is that one in front of me.

I chose one of the mob goblins that was approaching me in an attempt to pull me out as my target rather than the Goblin Leader. I timed my Telekinesis with its pull and stopped resisting their pulling.

Swing.

The goblin easily pulled out the sword as I suddenly stopped resisting. It lost its balance and the goblin fell gracelessly onto its backside.

Dumbass. What a clumsy fella!

I casually moved my blade with Telekinesis.

That blade cleanly decapitated the defenseless goblin.

I defeated one of them and made it look like an accident.

This was my first time murdering something, but I didn't feel bad at all. Instead, I felt pumped.

Actually, I was considering slicing apart the rest of the goblins in front of me.

This is dangerous. Could I actually be a cursed magical sword, one that has to drink blood, a cursed blade? But I couldn't stop after this. Then I'll be going full force!

“Gya, gyagoo?”

The remaining goblins ran towards their fallen comrade, perhaps unaware of what was going on.

From there, I flew to deliver a headbutt.

Well, since I'm a sword, a headbutt is actually a deadly move.

Following the basic rules of combat, I attacked the strongest one first.

I was aiming for the Goblin Leader.

The Goblin Leader, likely not having thought that a sword could move on its own, wasn't even able to dodge as it suffered the full brunt of my headbutt.

It stared unthinkingly at the blade that had pierced through its belly and out its back.

Collapse.

It fell to the ground like that.

Now there were only two left.

I felt no guilt at all over killing the goblins.

The feeling of liquid on me after cutting apart my enemies wasn't unpleasant. Maybe it was because I was a sword, but I felt completely okay with cutting my opponents.

Rather, I felt a strange sense of satisfaction.

Could it be the feeling of accomplishment at finishing my task as a sword?

A goblin turned to run away and I finished it off with one strike.

The remaining goblin was on its knees, petrified with fear. Finishing it off would be simple.

Name: Goblin

Race: Demon

Lv: 2

HP: 12 MP: 9 Strength: 7 Agility: 10

Skills: Sword wielding 1, Cobalt Killer

Aren't I pretty amazing? Even if it was a surprise attack, I killed them all with one hit.

That 132 attack stat wasn't just for show. Well, I have no way of knowing if that number is high or not, but it's more than enough to take out these goblins.

However, something was on my mind.

[Did I just glow?]

That's right. After I finished off my third or fourth goblin, my blade suddenly glowed for a moment.

The truth is, I felt that happen after my second kill as well. I ignored it, thinking it was just my imagination, but it looks like that wasn't the case.

But it didn't happen after I killed the first one.

Well, I should check my status to make sure nothing's wrong with me.

Name: Unknown

Race: Intelligence Weapon

Attack: 132 MP: 166/200 Durability: 100/100

Self-Evolution <Rank 1 Magic Crystal Points 3/100 Memory 10>

Skills: Appraisal 6, Self-recovery, Telekinesis, Telepathy, Wielder Stat Boost [small], Wielder Recovery Boost [small], Skill Sharing, Magic User

Set Skill: None

Memory Skills: Dig 1, Dismantle 1, Sword Wielding 1, Club Wielding 1, Command 1, Survival 1, Cobalt Killer

What are those? There was another line in my status. What caught my eye first was the added items next to Class.

Magic Crystals? It says 3/100. I shined with light three times. Are they related?

And Memory? I don't know what that means either. But it's almost certainly related to the added line after it that says Memory Skills.

After thinking hard about it, I realized all the added things in Memory Skills came from the goblins that shined with light after I killed them. This was clear from the fact that the first goblin I killed, the one with Alert and Poison Resistance didn't show up in my status.

I absorbed the goblins' skills?

After I selected Memory Skills, something like a notice spoke to me.

Of course, I'm going to set something. Then a screen showed up for me to pick a skill.

I picked them in order from top to bottom.

Set Skills: Dig 1, Dismantle 1, Sword Wielding 1, Club Wielding 1, Command 1, Survival 1, Cobalt Killer

Memory Skills: None

Does this mean I set them? I'm not really sure.

I also didn't know what the cause was for that light. Why wasn't there a light after the first one? The hint was the term magic crystal.

Magic crystals. They're a common occurrence in isekai summoned light novels; magic crystals are shiny stones infused with magic that reside within the bodies of monsters. If all goes according to my imagination, that is.

All I did was cut through the first one's neck, so maybe it's because of the way I killed them. I impaled the other three through their bodies. Maybe that was why.

[Hmm. I should test it.]

I lunged at the first goblin I killed once again.

I firmly lodged my blade within the collapsed corpse.

And after my third stab, I got the same reaction I had hoped for. I felt something that felt a little hard and my blade gave off light.

I felt something flowing into me and an inexplicable feeling of contentment. That was it. It was similar to the feeling of taking a bite of your favorite food while hungry.

It seemed like I could absorb magic or something after cutting the magic crystal. The goblins' Magic Crystals were probably in their bellies.

Perhaps I had an appetite for absorbing magic, and maybe I felt so murderous towards the goblins because I was reacting to their magic crystals.

[Well, I should verify that in the future.]

What came first was checking my Magic Crystal Points.

The Count grew to 4/100, and Alert and Poison Resistance were added to Memory Skills.

Now I was curious about the skills' levels.

The Goblin Leader had Dismantle 2, and one of the mob goblins had Dig 2. But the skills I got were level 1. It looked like the levels were reset.

Do these skills level up? Do I have to use the skills for that to happen? Or do I have to absorb Magic Crystals? I'll have to verify that in the future as well.

For the time being, I should set Alert and Poison Resistance.

Hmm. That aside, these corpses are a pain.

They're collapsed around the pedestal so if I went back into the pedestal, I'd have to keep looking at them.

I dragged their corpses outside of the ruins with Telekinesis.

There were trails of blood left on the ground, but this was still better than the corpses.

I also dug a pit for the corpses.

It'd be great if my newly acquired Dig skill worked.

Yep. I'm digging.

I was able to quickly scoop out dirt with my thin blade. It felt just like I was using a shovel. I couldn't tell if it was thanks to the Dig skill or if Telekinesis was good at this. But still, I want to think that something had an effect.

Well, I was glad that I had the new goal of collecting skills while I wait for a suitable wielder. Because I can become a stronger magic sword.

So, I immediately started searching for things to hunt.

I flew around the ruins with Telekinesis. If I ran low on mana, I would land and rest.

Because this was a plain, I was able to travel far without worrying about not being able to find the pedestal.

The first thing I found was a small rat with six legs.

[I should Appraise it.]

Name: Six-legged Rat

Race: Animal

Lv: 1

HP: 2 MP: 0 Strength: 1 Agility: 7

Skills: None

It's weak. Super weak. It doesn't even have any skills.

But it'll be fine as long as it has a magic crystal.

My current Magic Crystal Points are 4/100. I predicted that after I collect 96, my rank

would go up.

Die for my growth.

I dive-bombed the rat. My attack was more accurate than I expected, and it cleaved the rat in two.

But my body didn't glow.

[Huh? Why did nothing happen?]

I stabbed the rat another time, but I didn't glow this time either.

This scene was bizarre, but I survived because I was a sword. Because I didn't have a stomach to throw up from.

In the end, I couldn't find a trace of a Magic Crystal.

Then I came to a realization.

When I checked the rat's status, it said Animal as its race. Could demonic beasts be the only ones that have magic crystals? Since back on Earth, animals didn't have them either.

In order to test my hypothesis, I became a rat-slaughtering magic sword as I attacked multiple rats.

The result was that even after killing three or four of them, there were no magic crystals to be found.

Next, I targeted demonic beasts.

Though the reason why was because I had already found one.

It was a fifty-centimeter-long centipede that was gorging itself on the first rat I killed.

Name: Giant Centipede

Race: Demonic Beast. Threadworm

Lv: 4

HP: 18 MP: 7 Attack: 6 Agility: 14

Skills: Sense Vibrations 1, Climbing 1, Venomous Fangs

It said that it was a demonic beast. Good to go.

First, I stabbed it through the head.

But it started spasming violently.

It struggled while spewing yellow liquid from its mouth.

This time I cut its thorax in half as my finishing blow.

The separated pieces of the large centipede squirmed in a display of insect traits, but it quickly stopped moving.

Good God, that's gross.

But it was worthwhile to kill it.

I stabbed the now motionless centipede in the area around its heart and my blade shined with light.

Just as when I absorbed magic crystals, I once again felt a sensation similar to satisfaction.

So, demonic beasts definitely have magic crystals.

And the skills I gained were Sense Vibrations 1, Climbing 1, and Venomous Fangs.

But I don't have any venom... I set Venomous Fangs and used it. My MP dropped by 5 points, and a thin stream of liquid secreted from my blade. It's probably venom. Well, if it can be used then I don't care.

I then set Climbing and was about to set Sense Vibrations but I couldn't.

<You have exceeded the maximum number of Set Skills.>

It looks like I can't use all of the skills I gained.

I checked the line in my status that said Self-Evolution: <**Rank 1 Magic Crystal Points 5/100 Memory 10**>. It seems that Memory 10 means the maximum number of skills that I can equip.

Because I had equipped Dig 1, Dismantle 1, Alert 1, Sword Wielding 1, Club Wielding 1, Command 1, Survival 1, Cobalt Killer, Poison Resistance 1, and Venomous Fangs, I of course had 10 skills set.

As a test, I removed Club Wielding and set Sense Vibrations with no problem. Well, since I needed Club Wielding the least, I'll leave it like this until I gain more skills.

The least useful skills for me were definitely Command, Survival, Poison Resistance, and Climbing. I want to gain some skills that I can replace them with.

So, I resumed my search.

The next things I found were two shadows with their backs turned to me. They walked bow-legged and upright, kind of like chimpanzees, with green skin and ugly mugs.

[They're goblins. And one of them is holding something.]

After appraising them, I found that their statuses were almost identical to the others'. But in one of their hands was a large rat, likely their prey, that I had never seen before.

Name: Poison Fang Rat

Race: Demonic Beast. Fanged Beast

Lv: 1

Status: Dead

HP: 0 MP: 3 Strength: 4 Agility: 14

Skills: Alert 1

This'll be a piece of cake.

I approached them without being noticed by hiding in the forest's shadows.

There were only 2 meters between us.

I attacked the higher level one first.

[Woohoo! Hand over your magic crystal!]

Um, I seriously have no thirst for blood.

It's just that I always wanted to say that.

Thud.

I stabbed the goblin through the back accompanied by a dull sound. The goblin wasn't able to resist at all.

Seeing my blade glow, I immediately pulled my body out of the goblin.

The other goblin was stupefied as I rushed at it.

Two down. I acquired the skills Throwing and Hunting without a problem. I set them right away.

And I looked at the new demonic beast. However, I felt something was strange and tilted my head to the side. Though I didn't have a head.

[Poison Fang Rat? But the only skill it has is Alert?]

Something had to be off if it doesn't have Venomous Fangs. It didn't fit its name.

I lifted the dead rat's lips with Telekinesis. Large canines. And a yellow liquid squirted out the tip. Is that venom?

Hmm. What's going on? The centipede had the skill Venomous Fangs, but the rat with Poison Fang in its name doesn't?

I didn't have enough hints to figure out why, even if I worried about it. I should hunt more demonic beasts and gather some information.

Thanks to Sense Vibrations and Hunting, I sensed something moving a small ways from me. It didn't feel that big.

I slowly moved away from the forest.

Name: Scavenger

Race: Demonic Beast. Demonic Bird

Lv: 5

HP: 13 MP: 5 Strength: 9 Agility: 15

Skills: Poison Resistance 1, Enhanced Digestion

Is that a bird? I feel like Sense Vibrations will be an incredible help. I should go to it carefully.

I flew barely off the ground and took care to not make any noise as I moved towards it by avoiding the bushes.

I cut off the Scavenger's head without giving it the time to even get off the ground.

[Phew, it would've been annoying if it flew. Thank goodness I killed it before that happened.]

I stabbed the Scavenger multiple times before I absorbed its magic crystal.

I gained Enhanced Digestion. But since I don't have a digestive tract, Enhanced Digestion is completely useless to me. But I learned even this skill so easily. I truly admired how flexible Self-Evolution was.

That aside, I definitely felt a sense of satisfaction when I absorbed the magic crystal. It felt as though my appetite for magic crystals really existed. I want to absorb more.

Well then, would the next sacrifice please come on over here? If possible, one that has a skill I don't have.

While searching for prey like that, I saw a strange beast.

Something that looked like a kite was floating low in the sky. It wasn't moving fast, but

it was a peculiar being as it moved irregularly. It looked like a flying green jellyfish.

Name: Air Floater

Race: Demonic Beast. Demonic Plant

Lv: 5

HP: 14 MP: 10 Strength: 6 Agility: 4

Skills: Magic Absorption 1, Keen Eyes, Floating

I went towards it but it didn't react at all. It was just floating 10 meters in front of me.

Is it okay to attack it?

I decided to give it a slice. I aimed for what looked like a mushroom cap, the jellyfish's head that I believed to be the center of its body. There was an eye attached to that place.

I approached it slowly, giving myself enough time to react in case something happened.

Until I was two meters away from it.

The Air Floater moved much quicker than I imagined.

[Crap, I think it's going to throw up!]

About ten tentacles reached out towards me. The wriggling, dark red tentacles reminded me of centipedes or snakes. It was incredibly gross.

And while I remained motionless at the sight of such a revolting mass, tentacles wrapped around me.

[Ugh, is it absorbing my mana?]

I could tell that it was absorbing my mana through its tentacles.

Not only were they gross, but dangerous as well.

Thankfully the tentacles weren't particularly strong so I was able to sever them just by moving a little.

[Phew. That was dangerous.]

I checked my status and found 10 MP was being taken away.

What would have happened if it stayed on me?

This thing is dangerous. I should kill it right away.

I flew as fast as I could, aiming for the top of the Air Floater's head.

The tentacles were definitely weak.

I again cut aside its extending tentacles and stabbed it through the body.

I felt myself cut something solid and my blade glowed again. It was proof that I had destroyed its vital magic crystal.

The Air Floater lost all strength and fell to the ground.

Because it was staying afloat by using a skill, its corpse had lost all buoyancy.

And I gained Floating, Magic Absorption, and Keen Eyes. They looked like convenient skills. Floating and Telekinesis especially seemed to have great synergy with each other.

It let me stay afloat without doing anything. Of course, it consumed MP, but it cost a heck of a lot less than using Telekinesis to float. By combining it with Telekinesis, I found that this skill would let me stay afloat five times longer than before. Plus, by using Magic Absorption, I could fly for even longer.

After testing out Floating, I realized something.

[Come to think of it, the Air Floater had the Floating skill, but the Scavenger didn't have any skills that let it fly. Even though it was a bird type demonic beast.]

And the same thing was true for the Poison Fang Rat. Why didn't they have Venomous

Fangs or flight? Well, I don't know if I could use a flight skill if I don't have wing so I don't know if I could gain it or not.

Hm? Wait, being unable to use a flight skill because I don't have wings? Could Flight not be a skill in the first place?

The Goblins didn't have the skills Walking Upright or Breathing either.

And just like those traits, a bird's flying is inherent to it.

Those weren't skills but attributes inherent to their bodies. Those aren't related to magic or techniques at all.

By that logic, the Poison Fang Rat's venom was completely biologically based, something that it couldn't produce without venom glands or some other organ. It was the same as the venomous animals back on Earth.

In contrast, that huge centipede's venom was made with magic, a special ability redolent of the fantasy genre.

[Can I absorb skills like Sword Wielding because they acquired it by training?]

There were still many things I didn't know about my body. I needed to investigate more.

I used the last skill, Keen Eyes, and it was extremely useful. It was a skill that let me scan the area below me. Thanks to it, I was able to see almost everything in the area. Until now, my view was limited as if it was a camera fixed onto my handle, but now it was like I had a fun*** as a camera that could naturally move to look at things (*Tn: Funnel. A Gundam reference*). Well, I couldn't move my perspective very far from my body though.

[Great. Now to go hunt some other kinds of prey!]

It had been four days since I reincarnated as a sword.

[You bastard! What color is your magic crystal~!]

Today I had just sacrificed twelve demonic beasts to myself.

<You have activated an effect of Self-Evolution. 10 points acquired in Self-Evolution>

I checked my status.

Self-Evolution <Rank 2 Magic Crystal Points 102/300 Memory 12 Points 10>

My Magic Crystal Points were over one hundred.

[Huh? Isn't that too soon?]

When I checked it this morning, my Magic Crystal Points were only at 80.

[Hmm, all I did that's different from yesterday was hunt in a different area...]

I had moved farther away from the ruins because the monsters inhabiting the ruins were easy to beat.

The farther away from the ruins I got, the stronger my opponents seemed to get. The area was infested with Crash Boars, wild pigs with hammer-like snouts; Iron Ants, demonic ants that chewed on and swallowed rocks; and other somewhat large monsters like Rock Bison, beasts with hard, rock-like shells on their bodies.

Their levels were higher, they had more skills, and their magic crystals were a lot bigger.

[I see. The size of the magic crystals... Could stronger demonic beasts' magic crystals add more than just one to my Magic Crystal Points?]

That was probably it. A two-meter-tall Crash Boar isn't like to give the same amount as a small-fry goblin in the first place.

[I'll need to check this more thoroughly.]

My stats had gone up as well. Up way more than I imagined.

Attack: 162 MP: 300 Durability: 200

[Whoa! This is awesome! If I keep absorbing magic crystals, then my dream of becoming the world's strongest sword might not just be a dream! Hahaha, I want to do that now! My Memory went up a little as well.]

Great. I should aim to max out my stats.

[Also...what does Points 10 in Self-Evolution mean?]

I'm pretty sure I got it when I ranked up. I investigated that further.

Huh? Lots of lines appeared. Is this a skill browser?

Point Bonus Menu

Attack Boost [small], Durability Boost [small], Telekinesis Boost [small], Telepathy Boost [small], MP Boost [small], Memory Increase [small], Skill Level Up, Demonic Beast Analysis, Object Analysis, Mineral Analysis

Huuuh? There're lots of choices, but is this what I think it is? Is it letting me pick bonus skills? I selected MP Boost [small], the one I was most curious about.

<Would you like to use 5 points to acquire MP Boost [small]?>

Can I really acquire it? I answered "Yes" in my head.

<MP Boost [small] acquired.>

My Class Points went down by 5, and I gained MP Boost [small] in my Skills column. In addition, my MP had increased by about 100. Class-sensei is amazing! Wha-what should I do next? I want everything, but I don't have enough points.

This time I selected Skill Level Up. Surprisingly, it seemed that I could level up the

Memory Skills I currently had in my possession. But I had to pick each skill individually.

I chose Sword Wielding to test it out, and I needed 2 points to level it up. I tested all my skills and they were almost all at 2. Venomous Fangs and Floating cost about 5 points to level up.

What could be the cause of this difference? Could it be because Venomous Fangs and Floating don't have a level number next to their names?

Hmm. A lot of things weren't clear, but I decided to pick Attack Boost [small]. Because it'll likely be the most effective choice against the demonic beasts.

And after Attack Boost [small] was added to my skills list, my attack stat rose by 50.

Excellent. Just like that, increasing my Magic Crystal Points became a lot funner.

[Great, I'm starting to get motivated! I'm going to hunt the demonic beasts, then hunt them some more, and hunt them even more!]

Having decided to do this, I acted with alacrity.

I glided triumphantly across the plains.

And if I found any demonic beasts while I was in the sky, I attacked them immediately.

Like a bird of prey, I would dive onto any monsters I found and sink my blade into them.

Most of the demonic beasts died from my aerial assault, and the ones that survived would be in critical condition.

All that would be left is a scene of carnage.

And after I made sure that I had absorbed the magic crystal, I'd go back to flying in the sky and looking for prey.

In other words, I was a blood parched magic sword. It was a Search and Destroy mission.

I didn't feel any guilt at all. Should I call it hunting for my survival? Or maybe that this was kind of like searching for food?

I mean, besides, collecting skills was fun.

[Nice. I got a new skill.]

I was steadily gaining more skills. Though there were some that were absolutely no use to me.

How am I supposed to use Enhanced Digestion or Enhanced Taste?

I think these skills will be useful to my future wielder, but right now they're all perfectly useless.

Without a doubt, collecting these skills was stoking the flames of my inner otaku. It was funner than watching my Magic Crystal Points increase.

I want to fight against demonic beasts that have lots of skills I could use but...

As I was thinking that, a demonic beast showed up.

[The truth is, I wouldn't mind more goblins.]

Goblins usually gather into groups a lot so my Magic Crystal Points go up by that amount. And best of all, they have all kinds of skills.

Some of the goblins acquired skills through their daily lives, so they had a lot more skills than the animal type demonic beasts.

[Looks like I have to hunt some goblins.]

Thankfully, there were lots of them near the pedestal so finding them wasn't difficult.

I'll hunt them for a while and increase my Magic Stone Count.

But my plan didn't even get off its feet.

[There're no goblins!]

There were still a few goblins, but they were by no means numerous.

[Hmm... I know!]

I had a genius idea!

[I just have to find the goblins' den and annihilate them all at once!]

First, I had to find their den.

Well, in an empty place like this plain, it's almost certain that they dug a den somewhere. It shouldn't be too difficult to find their den from the sky.

So, there was a time when I used to think that.

[I don't see it at all.]

I hadn't been able to find the goblins' den for two days.

It seemed I had underestimated the goblins.

My only choice now is to have the goblins lead me to it themselves.

I let the mob goblins live and used them to guide me to their den. It was a beautiful operation, a goblin raid.

I flew low and followed behind the goblins.

I walked quietly.

No, I don't have legs, but that's what it felt like.

Has it been an hour since I started stalking them?

The goblins wasted a lot of time as they would suddenly start dancing on the spot or space out while watching a line of ants.

In the first place, I've never spent such a long time observing goblins, but bit by bit they were starting to get on my nerves.

I thought about killing them multiple times because of their slow walking.

[Since the ideology “Swift Death to Goblins” is so engrained in me.]*(tn: a reference to Saito Hajime of the Shinsengumi’s credo, *aku soku zan* or “Swift death to evil”)*

I want to praise myself for holding back this long.

I couldn't hold back my laughter while I was secretly intruding into their den hidden in the forest.

[Kukuku. Now I can let loose, right?]

I decided to release all my pent-up anger and desire for magic crystals on the goblins.

[Hand over your magic crystals!]

“Shugyagya!”

“Gyuha!”

[This is a really nice den.]

I knew I could slack my thirst or hunger or whatever by absorbing the magic from the magic crystals.

I erased any traces of myself the best I could and found more goblins.

I continued this assassin play for maybe an hour.

I must have slain over 30 of them already. Despite that, it was still quiet here.

Have they still not found me?

[Oh. Now I'm in a wide passageway.]

I continued through there.

After going down the passageway, I entered a large room, big enough to be a gymnasium.

I could see many goblins crowded in there. There must have been over fifty of them.

Even if they're small fries individually, that many of them together is a threat.

I could probably destroy any medium sized, normal monster.

And inside the room was a conspicuous creature.

There were lots of scars on its face and even its body was nearly twice as big as the other goblins'. In other words, it looked like a veteran.

It had iron armor on its body, perhaps taken from heroes, and propped next to him was a massive sword.

[Whoooo! Bingo!]

Name: Goblin King

Race: Demon

Lv: 21

HP: 97 MP: 26 Strength: 57 Agility: 26

Skills: Intimidation 2, Sword Techniques 2, Sword Wielding 4, Command 4, Boost Morale 3, Shield Wielding 2, Taunt 1, Throwing 1, Spirit 1, Energy Manipulation

Other goblins don't even compare to its status. It was a Goblin King.

[Are they protecting the king because they noticed there was an intruder?]

Checking its status sent quivers of joy through my body. It was the same happy feeling as seeing a buffet laid out before your eyes.

I was also able to see multiple variants among them. Prominent members among the goblins were there: soldiers, knights, mages, thieves, warriors, monks, medics, and

shamans.

[This is perfect!]

I charged up my strength. It was possible to control the strength of Telekinesis by creating an image with my mind. By loading it up with as much MP as possible, I could make Telekinesis have explosive acceleration.

It's name is the Telekinetic Catapult Attack!

Kukuku, I'm coming for you! Goblin King!

I entered the room in a flash and unleashed my power, aimed directly at the Goblin King.

I landed at top speed and attacked the sitting king's face with terrible force.

Telekinesis is silent.

So the Goblin King didn't react at all.

Stab!

After bursting the Goblin King's head, I was stuck like that in the wall.

It may have been my attack, but its power was intense. It's like a cannon.

The Goblin King's body belatedly began to tip and slowly collapsed.

Along with a loud thud was blood flowing on the ground.

“—————.”

The room was deathly silent for a single moment.

And then the goblins began to scream, perhaps from fear or perhaps from anger.

“Gyawooooooooo!”

“Guruuaaaaah!”

“Goruruuaah!”

Some were confused and panicking.

Some were running to the king’s corpse.

Some stayed where they were and simply screamed.

They reacted in many ways.

Then the goblin that was by the king’s side—it seemed like the king’s lieutenant—shouted at its fellow goblins what seemed to be directions. Five goblins reacted to its words and began to run for the entrance.

It seemed like the goblins didn’t even think that a sword could move on its own and were leaving the room to find whoever threw the sword.

All the goblins turned to look at the hallway.

What a bunch of fools! Go there and you won’t find anybody!

I fell from the wall, disguising this movement as if it was natural.

Using that momentum, I attacked the lieutenant.

I wouldn’t be exaggerating if I said my real targets were these guys.

[Hand over your spell!]

Though I targeted the king first as was my plan, the ones I most wanted to defeat was this goblin mage. I couldn’t get my eyes off them after Appraising its skills.

Name: Goblin Mage

Race: Demon

Lv: 9

HP: 27 MP: 36 Strength: 14 Agility: 20

Skills: Mineral Knowledge 1, Command 1, Staff Wielding 1, Combat Staff Wielding 1, Flame Magic 3, Magic Boost [small], Mana Manipulation

[Uhahahahaha! Now I can use magic too!]

Other world magic. This must be something otakus dream of.

I really wanted to use it.

I just laid my hands on that magic. There was no helping getting a little carried away.

[Before I test out the spell, I'd better clear out these guys first!]

From then on it was entirely one-sided.

Maybe it was because the goblins lost their king who had the skill Boost Morale, but they panicked and started shrieking.

Because their commanding mage was gone, there was no one to get them to calm down.

The higher ranked ones tried to counterattack, but they acted without any cohesion and were unable to combat me.

Normal goblins couldn't even hit me so I was completely undamaged by them.

They lost any semblance of organization and the goblins devolved into an unruly mob. They were even getting in each other's way because they were all packed in the room.

[Great. This guy's the last Archer!]

I first cleared away any of the goblins that could use long range attacks. All the remaining goblins could do was look at me as I remained out of reach by floating near the ceiling. Now it was time to gain lots of exp.

I flew around the crowd, killing off the goblins.

While taking care to preferentially target any goblins that tried to run away.

Many of them were able to run away, but despite that I must have hunted 30 of them.

What really surprised me was that my skills had leveled up.

It looks like I can increase the level of any skills I already have by absorbing magic crystals. Or maybe the level correlates with my enemies' skill levels. Either way, I was extremely happy at seeing that my skills had leveled up.

[Uhahahaha! Give me your EXP!]

After I absorbed the remaining goblins' magic crystals, I left the den feeling something similar to satisfaction.

[Hmm. Which way's the pedestal?]

Even though I felt so happy after sweeping the goblins' den...

The night had already taken over the area, making me lose my sense of direction.

[Hmm, the moon is over there, so...]

I have no idea. I'm saying I have no idea which way the moon leads to.

Though I relied on the moonlight, I obviously wasn't able to see as well as I did during the day.

I was perfectly lost.

[Should I give up on going back for today...]

I had thought of the pedestal as my home for the time being. I like to return there everyday whenever possible.

Plus, for some reason, I felt at ease whenever I returned inside the pedestal.

But it seems like it'll be impossible to go back.

I should treat myself by going night hunting. And since I'm a sword, I had no need to

sleep.

Though I was hesitant to go hunting in the plains at night because I was a little scared...

With things like this, I didn't have any other options.

I flew around, looking for demonic beasts.

I flew low enough that I could go to the ground should something try and ambush me.

[From far away, I saw some especially large flying creatures in the sky.]

Whether they turn out to be rats the size of bears or big snakes with wings.

I kept on alert not just with my eyes, but with all five of my sense.

Well, since I don't have a body it's actually the things similar to my five senses.

But even though it was nighttime, the demonic beasts didn't get any stronger. By this, I meant that the darkness did almost nothing to bolster the monsters.

Though it took time to find them, the fighting itself often ended in a moment.

[Great! Awesome! Echolocation and Sense Traces! I have lots of convenient skills!]

An especially useful skill was one I had gotten from the large rats and giant bats: **Echolocation**. It was a skill that told me the terrain and the location of demonic beasts within 30 meters of me by reflecting sound and magic, and I could also use it to do an incredibly detailed search.

[Maybe I'll keep farming magic crystals and rank up!]

Yes, I was becoming smug.

I had defeated multiple nocturnal demonic beasts that I hadn't seen before during the day, but, drunk off of my success, I was not looking at my surroundings.

“Kuwhooooooa!”

A loud cry suddenly came from somewhere near me.

[Huh?]

Looking for the creator of that sound, I looked up to see a massive shadow coming at me. At a glance, it looked about as big as a Cessna (*tn: a small plane. Why the author made this apparently esoteric analogy I have no idea*).

[There's no way! Echolocation didn't give any kind of response!]

I had just used Echolocation earlier and it didn't tell me anything was near me.

"Kuaaah!"

[Uwah!]

Something scratched against my blade, creating the sharp shriek of metal.

The blow itself was intense, sending me spiraling in a circle for nearly ten meters.

That wasn't all.

I checked my status and it said that that slight contact took away about 30 points from my durability.

[Oh shit! Surprise attacks are for cowards!]

I also committed surprise attacks, you say?

It's okay for me. After all, I'm a sword.

And why is it okay for me to do it if I'm a sword, you ask?

The point is, it's allowed for swords! Anyway, I'm a sword!

But getting attacked by something really pisses me off!

Even while flying during this surprise attack, I succeeded in recovering my balance in the air.

But I couldn't find out any specifics about my attacker.

It's fast! That's all I can say about it.

And I knew why Echolocation couldn't detect it.

It had been less than five seconds since it attacked me, but it was already incredibly far away. It's insanely fast.

I had only used Echolocation once every few minutes to survey the area. But something that fast could probably cross the thirty-meter radius and attack me in less than three seconds.

“Guwhooooa!”

[Holy shit! It's coming back!]

I tried to use Appraisal again as I narrowly avoided its charge.

Name: Lesser Wyvern

Race: Flame Fanged Wyvern. Demonic Beast

Lv: 21

HP: 223 MP: 95 Strength: 122 Agility: 142

Skills: Intimidation 2, Stealth 2, Flame Resistance 3, Control Air Flow 3, Poison Resistance 3, Hardened Scales, Enhanced Sense of Smell, Enhanced Absorption, Enhanced Sight

It's strong!

This draconic Fire-type Wyvern is the strongest Fire-type demonic beast I've faced until now. It even has way more skills.

I was able to avoid a direct hit, but the wind pressure alone shook my entire body. A strong gust hit me.

I underestimated this world.

I originally thought that since I hadn't struggled against anything, even catching a dragon would be easy.

[Shit!]

My high-ranked opponent could move much faster than me.

Isn't the difficulty level too high? No, wait. If I give up here, then it's game over. It's still too early to give up. If need be, I can glide along the ground and run away somehow. Probably.

But before that, I'll try and kill it. Though it's more like I didn't think I could run away from it if I didn't try something.

It might even leave me alone if I leave its territory; I simply don't know.

I need to give myself some leeway by showing I can counterattack.

Great, I'll start by trying to counter it with my blade. I'll outspeed it.

At the same time, I was trying to escape. Survival comes first.

It took it a long time to change directions or stop itself, maybe because it was too fast.

It made a large turn and tried to position itself facing me.

Perhaps my only solace was that it couldn't attack me continuously.

[It's coming!]

“Kraaaa!”

My target was its soft-looking belly. It was risky, but if I dodged with my blade pointed down, I could cut its stomach by raising my blade.

My only hope was to damage it enough to make it run away.

Its massive form was approaching me at an alarming rate.

But I was unexpectedly able to remain calm.

It was definitely fast, but it was still slower than a motorcycle or a car, and its movements were simpler than I expected.

[Take this!]

“Kuwhoooa!”

Yes, I failed.

It definitely dodged my blade. But it moved quicker than I thought it would.

I thought that I could remain cool-headed and deal with it, but I might have felt fear subconsciously.

The point of my sword grazed its belly. For a big bastard like him, it must only be a scratch.

I was relieved to know that I could wound it though.

And with its MP pool, there was a lot of MP I could potentially absorb from it.

That helped me feel more at ease with using skills.

“Grrrooooa!”

[Oh crap! Did I piss it off?]

I barely did any damage, but it looks like I just broke its rage meter.

How'd the saying go: let sleeping dogs lie?

It glared at me with eyes full of hatred even as it turned in a circle.

[This might actually be a little dangerous?]

And it rushed at me again.

I tried to dodge it——I got hit.

[Gyaa!]

“Kuwhooa-ahhh!”

[Goddammit! That was a good hit, you overgrown lizard! But I got you once!]

It must have realized I'd tried to counter it during our clash.

Right before the wyvern made contact with me, it curved its tail downwards, deftly changing its course with centripetal force. Its rear foot's claw hit me directly, and I withstood it.

But I didn't just stay there and take it.

When it extended its rear claws, I rushed at its right eye as it was right next to me.

Well, because I did that, the momentum snapped off the tip of my blade.

Stuck in its right eye was the piece of my blade.

That's a nice sight!

“Guwaaaaahhhh!”

It was flying erratically, twisting its body in immense pain.

[More importantly, am I okay?]

Only about two-thirds of my blade was left. Part of it was snapped clean off. Of course, it didn't hurt me at all, but is it okay for me to stay like this?

I didn't seem to have any problems with flight. I fly using Telekinesis and Floating so air resistance was no issue. There was no ill effect besides my changed appearance.

There wasn't any MP leaking from the broken end, either.

I was fine to a shocking degree.

The only thing left to worry about is how much the Self-recovery skill can heal me. I really hate being broken like this, but...

As I was thinking that, the broken end of my blade began to glow softly.

Huh. It seemed like Self-recovery was working properly.

[Shit, you overgrown lizard! How dare you do this!]

Rage surged within me after I made sure there was no permanent damage done to my body.

Seeing my once beautiful, white blade in this state was horrible. I won't forgive it.

The wyvern didn't want to let me go either, it seemed.

Its form, contorted with loathing, flew at me with full force.

It followed me without any sign of stopping; maybe it lost all reason or maybe it just wanted to tear me apart.

It was slowed down by its injury, but it was still faster than me.

[All right, let's do this!]

What you take from me, I'll take ten times as much from you.

I knew that despite my broken blade, my movements were completely unimpaired. So I had more options.

I moved away from it slowly, keeping on that heading.

Seeing that, it must have mistakenly thought I was trying to run away.

The overgrown lizard flew straight at me.

Dumbass! You flew right into my trap!

I immediately turned my body and accelerated, aiming a full-body headbutt at its wing.

The overgrown lizard, flying in a straight line for me, was unable to dodge.

We collided with terrible force as we both accelerated at each other.

Nearly my entire blade was broken. Only a tenth of my blade remained.

But it may have been worth it because the Lesser Wyvern's left wing was severed at the root, and the beast fell to the ground.



It must have fallen over 30 meters. But it didn't die quickly after a fall from that height.

I approached the fallen Lesser Wyvern and found its neck was twisted in a weird direction and copious amounts of blood and vomit were coming out of its mouth.

It was still twitching, but it was only a matter of time before it died.

[Phew. I somehow won.]

It was dangerous.

It might have gotten me after the first blow if it had done even a little more damage. My durability was at 23. That was really close.

[Okay, I'm glad I beat it, but...how do I get its magic crystal?]

That's right. My primary goal was its magic crystal, but it was difficult to reach its magic crystal when the majority of my blade is gone.

Is there any solution?

With Self-restoration's slow pace, it would take a long time for me to be fully restored. It would likely take more than a day.

And there was no way the hungry magical beasts in this busy plain would leave the Lesser Wyvern's corpse alone.

[What do I do...]

It seemed like glue was slowly coming out of the broken end of my blade due to Self-restoration.

[Hyaaaaaaa.]

I yelled with concentration. It didn't increase the speed of the restoration.

Hm, I did something really stupid just now.

There's no way that would—.

[Huuuh?]

I felt like my blade was glowing brighter. Is it really...

[Whoooa.]

The speed at which my blade was regenerating was noticeably higher. Did it really work?

I see. Does this mean that I can increase the effects of automatic restoration and skills like that through willpower? My MP was being drained extremely quickly. 1 point of MP for every second. But it was worth it because after about 3 minutes, my blade was perfectly restored. I had 15 MP remaining. I wouldn't have had enough if I hadn't absorbed MP from the Lesser Wyvern. That was really, really close.

[I learned a lot from this fight.]

And I even gained a magic crystal. I gained as much as I fought for.

My Magic Crystal Points went up by about 20 from just one magic crystal.

The Lesser Wyvern's magic crystal was in the base of its neck. I might have been able to strike it during the fight.

[For now, I should rest a bit in the forest.]

The day after I defeated the Lesser Wyvern.

I found the pedestal after looking for it in the air.

I thought that since a higher vantage will let me see farther, in the middle of the day I should find it.

And I found the pedestal in a place very far from me. Extremely far.

I must have gone the opposite way from the pedestal.

[Uryaaaaaa!]

I flew straight for the pedestal.

I met a few demonic beasts along the way, but I ate their magic crystals with one strike each.

Compared to the wyvern from yesterday, it seemed like these low-ranking magical beasts were staying still.

I just thought of this, but it seems like the monsters get stronger the farther I get from the pedestal.

The cause was likely the mysterious magic flowing from the area around the pedestal. It's just a guess, but there must be a barrier.

Since I got used to manipulating magic recently, I was able to feel it.

Though I can't tell who cast it. Could it have been my maker?

Because I flew full-speed straight for the pedestal, it took less than an hour to reach it.

Moving around in the day is definitely the most efficient.

I was only gone for a day, but I really did miss it. The barrier's warm magic really does feel nice, huh.

[Uwhoooo! Pedestal! I'm back!]

I dove straight into the pedestal.

Shhk.

Mmhm, this is calming me down. Being in the pedestal is calming me down a lot.

This pedestal is definitely my home. It's a healing place.

[Phew. I almost didn't find it~.]

I spent a while just looking at the clouds.

Ahh, this is bliss.

Then since I took a break, it's time to have some fun.

[Huhuhuhu... Hahahahaha! I finally got it! I am no longer a mere sword!]

Yes, I am talking about magic.

While annihilating the goblins, I gained a magic skill from the Goblin Mage.

It was magic that I wanted incredibly badly.

[Fire Magic is set.]

Preparation complete.

I concentrated.

After using skills so many times, I thought I could use it just like that.

No, I used to think that.

[There's no response.]

I didn't even feel it fail, let alone activate.

All I did was grunt. That's it.

[What? Do I not have enough MP? No, there's no way the Goblin Mage had more MP than me... I'll set all the skills it had for now.]

I set Mineral Knowledge, Command, Staff Wielding, Combat Staff Wielding, Magic Boost [small], and Mana Manipulation, and hoped for the best. Then several images popped into my head.

Fire Arrow, Fire Shield?

I'll try Fire Arrow.

The best magic is attack magic!

[The image of the spell popped up in my head.]

I read aloud the incantation that was inside my head.

After I finished reading it, I could feel magic flow out of my blade.

[Fire Arrow!]

Fyuuu.

A fiery bolt of fire formed in the air after my shout.

[Whoa, whoooooa?]

The completed fire bolt flew far just like an arrow.

I cast magic!

[Hahaha! I did it!]

All Fire Arrow did was scorch the earth a little.

If that's it, then it'd be a hundred times better just to attack monsters directly.

But that's not important. What matters is that I used magic.

[Then next! Fire Shield!]

A small buckler, a circular shield, made of flames appeared.

[Hmm. How strong is it?]

I threw a rock at it using Telekinesis.

I didn't throw the rock very hard. It was about as fast as a baseball pitcher's.

It blocked one hit.

A second, it blocked a third.

[Hm, seems that's all.]

After it blocked the third blow, the shield disappeared. It'll probably block an arrow, but I didn't trust it to block a sword or an axe.

I played around with the magic for a while.

No matter what spell I used, the MP cost was always 5 so because of my increased rank, I could continually use it.

[Fire Arrow! Fire Arrow! Woohoo!]

I calmed down after 30 minutes.

That feeling I have that the bushes are on fire is probably just my imagination.

[Whewww. Come to think of it, I should check out my skills.]

I should figure out which skills I should use to cast magic.

I first excluded the ones that had nothing to do with magic like Mineral Knowledge and Command.

I tried Staff Wielding, Combat Staff Wielding, Fire Magic, MP Boost [Small], Magic Manipulation.

[So I can use it.]

I unequipped Staff Wielding and Combat Staff Wielding.

[Fire Arrow!]

There was no problem with the magic.

Next, I unequipped MP Boost [Small].

I could definitely still use magic.

This time I unequipped Magic Manipulation.

Now I only had Fire Magic set.

[It doesn't work.]

I reequipped Magic Manipulation.

[Fire Arrow.]

Whooosh.

It seemed that Magic Manipulation was crucial to using magic.

I'll have to keep that set in the future.

I became curious about the skill that had a similar name as it, Energy Manipulation.

[Magic Manipulation for magic. Then what does Energy Manipulation control?]

The King that had Energy Manipulation also had Alert, Sword Techniques, Sword Wielding, Command, Boost Morale, Shield Wielding, Taunt, Spirit, and Throwing.

Is it for Sword Wielding? No, there's the new skill Sword Techniques as well. What is that?

I continued to test out the skills and figured out that Sword Techniques and Energy Manipulation were a set.

I was able to use Sword Techniques by using energy. It seemed like a killer move a warrior or someone would use.

There were two techniques: Double Slash which created a two-hit combo and Heavy Slash which was a deadly swing. This looked fun too.

[I'll use it now.]

With this technique, I could fight stronger demonic beasts. Hunting should become way easier.

[Now that I've finished hunting the goblins, how about I go a little far away?]

Four days after I mastered fire magic.

Without fail, I spent every day like a magic sword of slaughter, being feared by demonic beasts or getting attacked by them.

I continued to absorb magic crystals and I progressed to Self-Evolution Rank 4.

I recently realized that different magic crystals have different flavors. No, there's not a flavor per se, but the quality of the mana from the magic crystals definitely depended on the demonic beast it came from. I was able to comprehend differences between crystals. The ones I liked these days were the magic crystals from goblins and orcs and other Demon races. It's because they have more of a kick compared to other magic crystals when I absorbed them, and they were also more fulfilling. It was like the spicy cooking you only eat occasionally tasted strangely good, I guess. Well, the parallel is really, really small though.

I also got a ton of skills. And also, skill levels.

The den of the orc subspecies, the Gourmet Orcs, was especially good. For sating my appetite for skills and magic crystals, that is.

I got a number of weapons skills, and the levels of the skills I used the most often, Sword Techniques and Sword Wielding, went up to level 3.

At first, I didn't feel any real change after the level of Sword Wielding increased, but after reaching level 3, there was an overwhelming difference.

As I thought, it improved my control over my blade, or in other words, myself. Because of it, I was able make pinpoint attacks at enemies' weak points.

I was now able to dodge or parry attacks from the larger demonic beasts. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that it was the equivalent of a skill like Counter to a sword like me.

After that, I level grinded my skills to gain the skill level up bonus and significantly increase my combat ability. Now my Sword Wielding and Sword Techniques skills were both at level 7.

I also gained earth, wind, and water magic from the Gourmet Orc mages. I also gained purification magic and assist magic.

Maybe it was a characteristic of their races, but the majority of the orcs had high leveled Cooking and Dismantling so those two skills were at level 5 for me. I laughed when I realized that my highest-level skills after Sword Wielding were completely useless to me.

I acquired a variety of skills from the demonic beasts beyond just those.

I got the upgraded Venomous Fangs skill, Deadly Venomous Fangs, from Stone Spiders, spiders with hard, rock-like exoskeletons.

I got Sense Heat from Digger Moles, large carnivorous moles.

Just like with the Poison Fang Rats, the Paralysis Claw Cats didn't have a Paralysis skill so I avoided them.

From bird type demonic beasts, I got See Air Current and other sensing type skills, stealth type skills from rodent type monsters, and so on. There were many easy to use and helpful skills.

I took over about seventy percent of the plain, so now this place felt like the front yard of my house.

[Uryaaaa!]

Boing.

[Fire Arrow!]

Fffft.

I was fighting a monster that, depending on the setting, was either a ridiculously

strong cheat monster or a small-fry: a slime.

In this world, slimes are on the strong side. They regenerated quickly and were resistant to physical attacks. They were even stealthy.

Furthermore, it even had a skill called Cohesive Body, letting it fight by controlling its gelatin-like body. It whipped at me with tentacles made from its body or threw bits of its body like rocks, annoying me a lot.

Though it was particularly annoying to me.

In addition, it had strong acid inside its body. It seemed like its body was divided into layers, with a hard outer layer, an acidic middle layer used to dissolve prey, and a toxic inner layer that protected its magic crystal.

That toxic layer was extremely dangerous to me. It'll likely do damage to me if I even touch it.

My only option was to burn it using the fire magic I acquired.

But the slimes were big. The smallest ones were at least one meter tall. The larger ones were two meters. There were times when it took dozens of shots of fire magic to kill one.

I came up with the strategy to cut apart the slime and thus do damage to it, then, while it was cut, shoot fire magic straight at its magic crystal.

The slimes had a habit of creating tentacles from whichever direction it was attacked to counterattack. Though this increased the damage it did to me, the more tentacles it made, the less substance its body had, making it easier for my magic to hit its magic crystal.

It took less mana to heal myself from damage than it did to shoot so much unnecessary fire magic.

[Is that all of them?]

There really were a lot of them. It seems this was their habitat. No matter how many of them I defeated, they kept coming up out of the ground.

They weren't as strong as the other monsters in this area, but they must have made up for it through sheer numbers.

[Hm? Something's coming?]

But without even the time to sigh, I could sense a new demonic beast approaching me.

Could it have been led here by all of the slimes' corpses?

“Buwhooooa!”

A three-meter-long tortoise appeared, stomping loudly.

I appraised it and looked at its info.

[Cannon Tortoise? Oh yeah, there's a tube on its back that looks like a cannon.]

The tube extended one meter past its large shell. It's probably a gun barrel.

What's that thin pipe stuck to its back? It looked like a remodeled motorcycle's muffler, but larger.

“Buwhooooa!”

Vweeee!

A sharp sound, similar to a vacuum cleaner, began to emit from the tortoise, as if in response to its roar.

[I see. So it sucks in air from that pipe.]

Using the See Air Currents skill I took from bird type demonic beasts, I could tell what it was doing. The air around the Cannon Tortoise was entering the pipe that was on its back.

Bang!

And an invisible cannonball shot out from its cannon.

Well, I could clearly see it since I had See Air Currents so I was easily able to dodge its shot.

[So it shoots compressed air!]

It had been a while since I last faced a monster that could use long range attacks.

But its movements were incredibly slow.

“Buwhoooa!”

And to top it all off, it had to reload after a single shot and it could only shoot forwards.

I knew this because I moved as fast as I could behind it, and it sluggishly turned its body towards me.

But its shell looked very hard. If I got stuck there, it seems like it'd be really annoying.

[Then I'll kill it before that happens!]

I flew up high and from there dove straight for the Cannon Tortoise's neck.

It was looking around for me after I disappeared. Its neck was clear for me to see.

And my blade flew true, severing the Cannon Tortoise's neck in one clean strike.

[Great! Exactly what I wanted to happen!]

I was celebrating my own victory.

But that happiness lasted for only a moment.

[C'mon, let me rest a little.]

The slimes' corpses attracted the Cannon Tortoise, and the Cannon Tortoise's blood attracted a new demonic beast. It's natural for me to keep going up the food chain, but I really wanted to take a breather.

Plus, the demonic beast looked really strong this time.

“Grrrrr.”

[Uwa, that thing's super intimidating.]

The demonic beast before me was a seven or eight-meter-long red leopard. At the end of its tail was a flame like a torch.

[I'd better appraise it.]

Its name was Flare Leopard.

Its actual stats were probably the highest of any demonic beast I'd ever fought in the past. Especially its agility stat of 305, which was more than double that of the wyvern's. It also had fire magic so it could probably fight me with both long range and short-range attacks.

[What a pain.]

But the stronger the monster, the more it will add to my Magic Crystal Points.

How will its magic crystal taste?

[I'll be eating your magic crystal!]

“Kuwaang!”

Two days passed after my intense battle with the Flare Leopard.

[Great, I'll go now.]

I was currently heading for the outer rim of the plains. I named it Area 5.

I ingeniously divided the areas based on the strength of the demonic beasts that appeared there.

The farther I got from the pedestal, the stronger the demonic beasts got, perhaps because of the pedestal's barrier.

I called the area around the pedestal where only goblin small fries appeared Area 1, and my plan was to have the number increase along with the demonic beasts' strength.

And the place I was going now, Area 5, was set with the biggest number.

Beyond Area 5 was all unknown territory. From what I could see, the plains ended and a forest suddenly sprouted up.

But I could occasionally catch glimpses of the same small fry monsters I usually see in Areas 1 or 2 behind the trees, so I doubted there were demonic beasts stronger than those in Area 5 there.

Well, I did wonder why none of the demonic beasts in Area 5 went into the forest.

I may be able to find out later.

[I don't see any small fries.]

In the plains, the number of demonic beasts tended to decrease as I progressed through the Areas. Instead, the number of large demonic beasts that had huge territories increased.

Yesterday, even though I spent the entire day slaughtering everything I could find, I only hunted about 20 of them.

But the average Magic Crystal Points for each one was over 15; even hunting a hundred goblins was nothing compared to this.

In addition, this is my current status.

Name: Unknown

Race: Intelligence Weapon

Attack: 314 MP: 1000/1000 Durability 800/800

Class <Rank 5 Magic Crystal Points 1366/1500 Memory 34 Points 38>

Skills: Appraisal 6, Attack Boost [small], High Speed Self-recovery, Skill Sharing, Wielder Recovery Boost [small], Wielder Stat Boost [small], Telekinesis,

Telekinesis Boost [small], Telepathy, MP Boost [small], Demonic Beast Knowledge, Magic User, Memory Increase [small]

Because I increased my class rank, I used the points I received to level up Self-Recovery to High Speed Self-recovery, and I gained the new skills Telekinesis Boost [small], Demonic Beast Knowledge, Memory Increase [small].

I only changed my memory skills when I ranked up, so the truth is, I didn't understand all of my skills. There were also many skills I couldn't use.

[Oh, demonic beast discovered!]

Name: Goblin

Race: Demon

Lv: 3

HP: 10 MP: 2 Strength: 7 Agility: 8

Skills: Alert 1, Poison Resistance 1, Cooking 1

Description: A variety of demon born 10,000 years ago from the fallen Demon God's remains. Possesses strong ill-will and hatred for all beings except other demons. Agile and enjoys petty tricks. Has a violent and cruel personality. As an evil being, it is recommended to eliminate on sight. Location of magic crystal: within the torso, the solar plexus.

I stopped flying over Area 2 and found two goblins walking across the plain. Though I cleared out their den, I didn't drive them all to extinction so there were still a few of them around.

I gained the description at the end of the status window from a point bonus. I could use it at the same time as Appraisal.

Fighting became a lot easier thanks to it. It was possible to kill monsters I'd never seen before with one strike because it told me the demonic beasts' weak points and where their magic crystals were.

[Eliminate on sight... It's like they're cockroaches.]

It seems they were more evil than I first thought.

Well, by human standards that's probably the right thing to do.

Since I was originally a human, I should try and stick with human values and just take their EXP.

The next one is...

The other goblin's appearance was a little different.

It had a pair of twenty-centimeter-long horns that were irregularly bent. Its skin, unlike that of normal goblins, was pitch black as if ink had been rubbed all over it.

Name: Evil Goblin

Race: Demon

Lv: 2

HP: 38 MP: 21 Strength: 26 Agility: 19

Skills: Sword Wielding 2, Throwing 1, Climbing 1, Poison Resistance 1

Title: Servant of the Demon God

Description: Unknown

One of the Evil Goblins, a variant that was sometimes with the normal goblins, appeared once again. They were in the goblins' den as well, but I just thought, 'They look a little different.'

But I was surprised after I appraised one when I left the den. They were no match for the Goblin King, but they were overwhelmingly stronger than the normal goblins. The one in front of me may be level 2, but its stats were very high. It even had a title.

It's probably an elite goblin. It must have lead many goblins before. And its description was unknown.

Well, since it said to eliminate on sight for the normal goblins, I'll just turn them both into EXP.

But this means there really are gods in this world. I couldn't tell if it was just some supernatural being that was calling itself a god or if it was a real god, but if possible, I would like to meet one. Because the only image I have of gods or religion is one of repression.

[Give me your magic crystal!]

I moved while hunting the demonic beasts like that.

[Yahoo!]

Yesterday, I came up with a smart way to move.

First, I used the strongest Telekinesis I could and to fly incredibly fast.

Then I allowed gravity to take over and fall.

Rinse and repeat.

It was something I thought up when I used the Telekinetic Catapult Attack. Its name is the Telekinetic Catapult Movement Technique.

It only used MP during the initial movement, so I was able to save MP.

I repeatedly used the Telekinetic Catapult Movement Technique and made it to Area 4 before noon.

The demonic beasts in Area 4 weren't anything to sneeze at.

The times I killed them in one shot decreased, and when they landed an attack on me, my durability went down by a lot.

When the goblins in Area 1 attacked me, my durability didn't go down at all, but if the demonic beasts here land a direct hit, it would go down by more than a hundred. It would be dangerous to let down my guard.

And I finally arrived at Area 5.

[Okay then. I wonder what kind of demonic beasts are here.]

I used multiple survey-type skills and found a demonic beast.

It is incredibly important when hunting to deliver a preemptive attack on your prey once you find it.

Because there are some instances when I can take down a demonic beast without taking damage myself.

[But there're no demonic beasts here at all.]

I looked around for them for an hour, but I hadn't found a single one.

Could there be none here?

I gave it the name Area 5, but could Area 4 actually be the highest?

I was a little disconcerted by this thought, but I eventually found one at the far corner of the Area.

A huge magical response. It's definitely a demonic beast. And the strongest one I've ever felt.

[Woohoo! That magical response is super strong!]

The strongest magical response I'd felt until now was the Flare Leopard in Area 4, but this response dwarfed that one.

[I should fly a little higher.]

I increased my altitude to avoid being spotted on the ground.

Sensing-type skills will probably have a hard time detecting me since I'm not too strong.

[Found it! But what is that thing? A puddle?]

I could see a puddle, about five meters in diameter, smack dab in the middle of the plain.

But I could feel strong mana coming from that puddle.

Hmm. Is it inside the pond?

Should I go towards it or not?

At a glance, I don't see any kind of animal inside the puddle.

[Maybe I should go a little closer to it and appraise it.]

Regardless, Appraisal wouldn't work at this height. I needed to get within 20 meters of it.

And this happened when I moved towards the puddle.

Bururu.

Ripples formed on the surface.

Was it the wind? No, the ripples were different from that. It was more like it was gelatin?

Quiver-quiver-quiver-quiver.

The puddle shook even more. And it jumped into the air with enough force that I almost thought there was an explosion under it.

On a closer look, that wasn't water.

[Uwagh! It's a huge slime!]

What I thought was a puddle was actually a huge, firmly coalesced slime.

It must have perceived my reaction and readied itself for combat.

The force of its attack weakened as it surged towards the sky like a fountain.

And it fell to the ground from the force of gravity. It was like I was looking at a waterfall.

The force of its fall caused its gelatin-like body to spread across the ground like a lake, but it reformed into a huge round mass. Aside from its scale, it appeared no different than other slimes.

With that aside, this is my first time seeing such a big slime.

Most slimes are at most one meter large. Even the bigger ones didn't surpass two meters.

But this slime was not only over fifteen meters long, but it had a massive amount of mana. It was a little overwhelming.

[A-anyway, I'll appraise it now.]

Name: Gluttonous Slime Lord

Race: Amalgamated Monster. Demonic Beast

Lv: 58

HP: 620 MP: 822 Strength: 539 Agility: 308

Skills: Evasion 3, Evasion Boost 4, Camouflage 6, Absorption 8, Harden 8, Instant Regeneration 7, Resist Changes to Form 7, Jumping 5, Soften 7, Cohesive Body 8, Resist Physical Attacks 7, Gluttony 9, Sense Mana 7, Dimensional Storage, Energy Manipulation, Enhanced Absorption, Caustic Acid Body, Enhanced Digestion, Mana Manipulation

Description: The pinnacle of the Gluttonous Slime line. Can continue to grow without limit as long as it consumes living organisms near it. It can use magic that is very close to space-time magic, so it can preserve any enemies it defeats in its dimensional storage and gradually eat its prey without end. There have been reports of slimes in areas rich with food that were strong enough to defeat and consume dragons. There have been many cases of nations dispatching forces to exterminate these slimes the moment they are discovered. **Magic crystal location:** Center of the body.

Uwa. It's a super dangerous monster. And it says it can grow without limit...

Is the one I'm facing still a young'un? It isn't as dangerous as what the description described, but it's dangerous nonetheless.

It has Acid Body in addition to Resist Physical Attacks.

That means if I charge in blindly, it'll grab and melt me.

Other slimes only had a Cohesive Body level of 4, but this one is level 7.

[I see a death flag coming up if it lands a direct hit on me.]

So, what should I do?

Maybe magic will work? But even if it's the most effective method I have, wouldn't it take more than a hundred bolts of fire magic to whittle down its massive body? I almost certainly don't have enough MP for that.

Vrrrrp.

The slime protruded towards me, but it wasn't able to touch me when I was so high up.

But I was sure that it sensed me as prey, something to eat, because of its high Sense Mana skill.

Should I barrel through it with a skill?

But even if I cut it to pieces, its Instant Regeneration skill would likely ruin that strategy.

[But can I handle it?]

Because of its acidic body, when I attack it, it'll damage me. Plus, it had strong acid in its body so I didn't want to attack it for no reason.

[Well then, oh crap!]

The Slime Lord's body had been slowly compressing, its surface rippling. Then a portion of it suddenly jumped up like buckshot. In other words, it was a bullet covered in acid flying at high speed towards me.

[That was close!]

I dodged it somehow by using the Evasion skill. But that attack just now was probably just testing me out.

I wasn't sure if I could dodge a more violent attack.

[Great, so it's telling me it wants to throw down. Try and handle my killer move.]

I shot fire magic at the Slime Lord.

It didn't seem to have much of an effect.

But that was enough.

[I'm saying I know what you'll do.]

I kept shooting it with fire magic and throwing rocks with Telekinesis. I kept attacking it without end, with the intention of doing some damage.

The Slime Lord slowly increased the number of its tentacles so the damage I took accumulated as well. Plus the amount of MP I was using to recover was increasing.

[Tch. It's doing more damage to me than I can recover.]

Uwah!

Hyah!

Hugyaah!

The more tentacles it made, the more ferocious the Slime Lord's attacks became.

But that was exactly my goal.

[Even after evolving, you act exactly the same way!]

I purposefully goaded it into intensifying its tentacle attacks because then the amount of its body protecting its magic crystal would become thinner.

I lunged for its magic crystal by using the Telekinetic Catapult.

It was easy to say that it was a simple attack. But all of my concentration went into that attack.

I used wind magic, Wind Shooter, to increase the speed of the Telekinetic Catapult to super high speeds. I also added the Sword Techniques skill for its destructive ability, unleashing my most powerful attack.

[I gave this attack a singular name. Its name is the Heavenly Killer Move!]

I was in an excited state so I gave it the name of what first popped up in my head, but when I calm down I'll get rid of its name. Probably.

There was silence for a moment.

Vmmmmmmmmmmmmmm!!

A boom roared throughout the plain immediately afterwards.

If I weren't a sword, the loud noise would likely have made me faint.

The Slime Lord, unable to even counterattack, had a large hole forming in it. Of course, I had destroyed its magic crystal.

Quiver-quiver-quiver—.

And then the Slime Lord stopped moving and spread formlessly across the ground.

Seeing that unknown slime spread across the ground was a strange sight to behold.

[Phew, I won...but that was seriously dangerous.]

We had only clashed for a moment, but nearly half my blade had already melted. I would have dissolved in a flash if that thing ate me. Killing it with one strike was the right choice.

<You have activated an effect of Self-Evolution. 30 points added to Self-Evolution>

It had shockingly added about 150 to my Magic Crystal Points. It was definitely an elite monster.

Name: Unknown

Race: Intelligence Weapon

Attack: 352 MP: 1300/1300 Durability: 1100/1100

Acquired Skills: Camouflage 1, Harden 1, Instant Regeneration 1, Soften 1, Dimensional Storage

Maybe I'll test out the skills I got from here.

There were some useful looking skills so I tried them out.

[Hmmm?]

I used Camouflage thinking it would make me blend into my surroundings, but I couldn't tell if it had an effect or not. I myself couldn't see if Camouflage was working well or not. I also couldn't tell what effect Harden had when I tested it. Because I'm already plenty hard.

Next was the fun looking Soften skill.

[Whooa. I'm all soft now.]

The level was low so the effect was minimal, but my blade was definitely softer.

I shook my body and my blade vibrated. This is fun.

Well, this was just enough as an appetizer compared to the skill that was coming up next.

[Dimensional Storage, activate.]

It was the so-called Inventory ability.

The stones in front of me disappeared. I reactivated it but this time imagined something coming out, and the stones appeared in the air.

I put grass and rocks in it and notices popped up telling me what was in storage. It was convenient.

[Now I just need to check its capacity.]

I put the undisturbed remains of the Gluttonous Slime Lord into my inventory.

It was huge; it could probably have filled a twenty-five-meter-long swimming pool to half height.

[It really is an elite demonic beast's skill.]

I still can't tell what the skill's limit is, but having this much storage should be plenty useful to my wielder. She could use it instead of a wallet.

After I rank up, my MP and durability go back to full. Thanks to that, I was perfectly fine. But it didn't get rid of mental fatigue.

[I'm tired so I'm going to go hunt in a weaker area.]

The day after my fierce battle with the Slime Lord. I explored Area 5 today as well.

I thought that since I fought the Slime Lord yesterday in the southern region, I should go explore a different area.

There might be another strong monster like the Slime Lord...

And in the eastern region, there was a massive twenty-meter-long snake, the Dopplesnake. Its body was the thickness of a barrel.

As befitting its name, it had a skill that let it create clones of itself.

It was a skill that made clones identical to the user.

I was surprised to see a clone disappear like an illusion after I defeated it.

In addition, it seemed that if the skill level was high enough, then the clones' strength could exceed the user's.

But I was disappointed at the long-awaited user's relative weakness.

Its combat abilities were inferior to the demonic beasts that lived in Area 4. No, if it had made use of its massive body then it would have been plenty strong, but...because it was hiding in such a cramped place, it couldn't use its full strength. I found the original hidden underground and immediately ended its life.

[Huhuhu, thanks to that, my attack stat doubled.]

I immediately tried out the Clone Creation skill, but...

“Huh? I’m not a sword...”

[The heck, that’s me before I reincarnated.]

That’s right, the clone that Clone Creation made was in the form of my body back when I was a human. Thanks to the skill Divided Thought that I got from the Dopplesnake, I was able to move both the sword and the clone at the same time.

“Huh? Doesn’t this mean I don’t need a wielder?”

[For real? How strong is the clone?]

I thought to myself, ‘Can’t I have my clone wield me?’ but things didn’t work out that easily.

Currently, my clone had a time limit. It lasted 5 minutes.

In addition, the clone was extremely weak. It had an average stat value of 5, making it weaker than even goblins.

Even worse, its skills were weak. My clone could use my skills, but they were all at level 1.

I couldn't use it like this.

And it was naked. Thankfully, no one was here to see it. I tested it out multiple times, but all I could do was make it covered in rags. Could it be because my Clone Creation skill's level was low?

I'd probably use this skill as bait. But because the mana cost was so high, it took over 500 MP to even make a weak one.

The truth is, at this rate this skill will be completely useless.

Beyond those, the snake only had skills I couldn't use like Shed Skin, Sense Heat, and Regenerate Scales.

The only valuable and useful skill it had was the upgraded venom skill, Deadly Venom. It was the upgraded version of Severe Venom, the one I already had.

[I'd better try out Deadly Venom in a real fight.]

I should put the Dopplesnake in my storage for now.

Dimensional Storage still wasn't full despite storing the huge snake. Its capacity is beyond what I can imagine.

I went towards the northern region since this afternoon.

Of course, I moved while hunting and storing demonic beasts.

I realized, after attacking the southern and eastern areas, that in each of the Area 5's vast cardinal directions, there was one boss monster that ruled its respective region.

I guess they were kind of like regional bosses.

Because the only demonic beasts that I considered strong that I found here were the

Slime Lord and Dopplesnake. The rest were likely those regional bosses' prey.

So, I decided to go for the northern region's boss next.

[I can't wait for the regional boss. It'll probably have strong skills.]

There I found a tortoise demonic beast, the smallest regional boss I had met until now. But it had just as much mana as the other regional bosses.

It was 5 meters long. There were ten pipes sticking out of its shiny, black shell, and there was a thick gun barrel sticking out from the middle. I found its name with Appraisal.

[So it's a Blast Tortoise.]

It seems to be an upgraded form of the Cannon Tortoise, the one I beat before. This one also had the ability to suck in air, compress, and shoot it through its cannon.

“Guwhoooooooooa!”

But it will likely be more powerful the more pipes it has.

In addition, it seemed to have a search ability with a long range befitting a long range attacking demonic beast.

It fixed its cannon on me, already considering me its target despite my being quite a ways away from it.

“Guwhoa!”

Ba-bang!

It fired consecutive blasts of compressed air.

[Uwah!]

I never thought that it could fire multiple times in a row. The Cannon Tortoise couldn't fire without reloading after every shot; this one is definitely an upgraded version.

Ba-ba-bang!

Another barrage of high speed air missiles.

[Hyah!]

I flew up to avoid them but...

Ba-bang!

[Gyah!]

The air missile suddenly exploded. The air missile exploded in all directions, hitting me. It did a lot of damage.

Just the splash damage did this much to me!

It can even remotely detonate them? That's way too OP!

[Kugh, this is super dangerous!]

With my movements impeded, air missiles continuously flew towards me.

My durability went down a lot after each hit.

I saw more coming this way.

I needed to escape.

I dodged its air missiles by falling immediately with the Telekinetic Caatapault.

I evaded its barrage by moving as fast as I could in a zig zag pattern.

[You arrogant little!]

I slowly moved towards it while receiving heavy damage.

[Got you!]

As long as I can get close, you're mine.

I aimed my blade at its exposed throat and——failed to cut it.

[Ack! Don't run away!]

Not expecting such fast movements from the typically slow tortoises, I saw it retract its throat and limbs.

I attacked its shell in a blind rage, but I couldn't even scratch it.

I'd likely be able to penetrate it after a dozen or so attacks, but...

[But of course you won't let me!]

Fwup-fwup-fwup-fwup-fwup!

The turtle, after hiding its neck, began spinning in place. Just like Gamera (*tn: the titular monster from a Japanese movie series. Can pull in its limbs and head to emit flames, allowing it to fly by spinning like a flying saucer*).

And it indiscriminately fired air missiles.

It was difficult to dodge these unaimed attacks because I couldn't read where it would fire.

The air missiles landed around me, blowing up the ground.

But even if I increased my distance from it, the air missiles would just home in on me again.

It may have been able to tell my location by using a sensing-type skill as, though I moved to be above its shell, the tortoise tilted its shell and shot its air missiles upwards.

[Uwagh! This is bad!]

Above is no good.

Then I should go below.

It probably won't be able to fire all the way to the ground.

I fiddled with my status Window while dodging its air missiles.

Thanks to the Divided Thought skill that I got from the Dopplesnake, I was able to dodge and adjust my status without a problem.

I used some of the Class points I had left to increase my Earth Magic to 4.

I remembered where I got this earth magic. From the Gourmet Orc mages. They also had an earth magic skill of 4.

[There it is, there it is!]

I was now able to use the spell I wanted.

I was able to dig a hole just like the Gourmet Orc Mages did.

[——Earth Digger!]

I plunged into the hole I magically dug. And I continually cast it.

I was able to be right underneath the tortoise.

Though I couldn't see it, I could roughly sense its location.

[Earth Wall.]

And while I was directly underneath it, I used the level 3 earth magic, Earth Wall. It was originally a spell that raised the earth near someone's feet to create a wall, but I used it to lift the tortoise's massive body.

The earth wall extended about two meters underneath the Blast Tortoise's shell, lifting it slightly.

“Guu?”

[Take this!]

The tortoise was confused as it no longer felt the ground underneath it.

And that was when I hit it with a full-body headbutt.

Clang!

But my goal wasn't to damage it.

[Just as I thought!]

I charged at it from below to push it off balance. With its body elevated by Earth Wall, the tortoise tipped over from my attack. Its massive body was on its back.

It tried to use its tail to right itself, but it didn't work.

Kukuku. It won't be able to run away while it's like that.

Then the tortoise fully extended its neck and legs to turn itself back.

But there was no way I was going to miss this chance.

My fastest attack, the one I used to kill the Slime Lord, the Telekinetic Catapult, landed on the tortoise's neck.

In the end, it was a tortoise. It couldn't handle my genius ideas.

[Victory!]

But that was extremely dangerous. I really can't underestimate Area 5.

I dug my way in through its exposed neck and absorbed its magic crystal after finding it next to its heart.

Of course, I stored the Blast Tortoise as well.

Shockingly, I had still not fully filled the storage.

[I don't have much MP left. I should go back.]

I put off exploring Area 5's western region for tomorrow.

Plus, I wanted to try out the skills I got from the tortoise.

After that, I tested out the skills when I was back at the pedestal, but the only skills I could use were Air Compression and Shoot Air Missile. Well, I didn't mind because these skills were useful.

Shoot Air Missile gathered the air around me and shot it like a bullet. The Blast Tortoise was likely able to fire continuously by storing air in its shell and using it with its skill.

As for me, repeated fire was possible by using Air Current Manipulation or wind magic.

Air Compression at first glance is a useless skill, but the truth is it was really fun.

For example, by combining it with Shoot Air Missile, I could increase the power of each shot. Or I could compress the air in front of me to make a shield. It wasn't that strong, but it had a lot of use if combined with another skill.

[I'm glad that I have a lot of good skills, but if I want to be able to use them freely, I need to practice more.]

The stronger the skill, the harder it was to use it freely.

Next day in the afternoon.

I was in a fierce battle with the last regional boss.

Its name was the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger.

It was basically a tiger with massive fangs, but it was over four meters tall and over ten meters long.

It was a formidable opponent as, in addition to its size, it was able to move almost too

fast to be seen and it could even jump on the air, allowing it to move freely in all three dimensions.

It also had multiple skills that let it control vibrations; it was sufficient to say that its attacks were abominably strong.

And because of its mana-infused fur and strong muscles, my blade wasn't able to properly cut it.

I moved out of the way of the tiger's hind claws and tried to slash at its side, but I was stopped.

“Rooooaar!”

[Kugh! I need to retreat!]

I somehow dodged the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger's attack by twisting my body. But a terribly strong impact landed on my blade.

[Was that its skill?!]

All it did was graze me but the impact was enormous!

I might even burst into pieces if it lands a direct blow.

I suppose it was a blessing that it didn't have any long-range attacks so it couldn't attack me when I tried to keep my distance. But because it was incredibly fast and had that air running skill, it was hard to keep any kind of distance. Even if I fly into the sky, it keeps following me.

[Fire Arrow!]

“Roar!”

All my flame bolt did was singe its fur a little.

It's not very effective!

If I don't slash with a lot of force, then I do almost no damage. And my magic had no

real effect on it at all.

“Kwaa!”

But the tiger isn’t unscathed. I annoyed it at least a little. As a result, the only thing adding up was the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger’s rage.

[At this rate, things will only get worse.]

My only two choices were to either make a suicide attack for its vitals or to use an effective skill on it.

I searched desperately for a skill that might work on it while dodging the tiger’s lunges.

And I found it.

[This is it!]

But will using this as it is right now really make me win?

I decided to use my Class points to prepare for all outcomes.

<15 Self-Evolution points have been used to evolve Deadly Venomous Fangs into Demonic Venomous Fangs>

That’s right. The skill I was looking for was Deadly Venomous Fangs.

The Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger didn’t have a Poison Resistance skill. Deadly Venomous Fangs will probably have an effect. Plus, I evolved it by using my Class points.

If this doesn’t work out, then I should run away.

While thinking that, I stabbed the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger with my blade.

[How’s that!]

I appraised it while running away.

[Great, it's a victory for me]

As I had planned, the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger was envenomed. Its health was draining rapidly.

“Kwaaaaahhh!!”

The Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger’s attacks intensified. But to kill it before the venom did and to continue spreading the venom, I kept attacking it.

Three hours later.

[I wooooon!]

I pointed my sword towards the sky and screamed victory.

The thing below me was the last and strongest of Area 5’s bosses, the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger.

I may have envenomed the tiger, but it was relentless. It entered berserk mode after it lost half its health, and I was almost overwhelmed.

The truth is, I thought that I was losing.

Though the risk came with several rewards.

First come the skills.

My newly gained skills, Vibration Pierce and Vibration Fang, were amazing.

Vibration Pierce was a skill that used vibrations to destroy things from the inside out.

And Vibration Fang used high-frequency vibrations to amplify the sharpness of teeth; it was the so-called vibroblade. I had great synergy with these skills as they explosively enhanced my slashing power.

Another reward was that I had ranked up. Because each of the regional bosses gave

me more than 150 to my Magic Crystal Points, all the magic crystals I harvested in Area 4 and the bosses resulted in me being able to evolve.

Name: Unknown

Race: Intelligence Weapon

Attack: 392 MP: 1650/1650 Durability 1450/1450

Class <Rank 7 Magic Crystal Points 2109/2800 Memory 47 Points 82>

Skills: Appraisal 6, Attack Boost [small], High Speed Self-recovery, Skill Sharing, Wielder Recovery Boost [small], Wielder Stat Boost [small], Telekinesis, Telekinesis Boost [small], Telepathy, MP Boost [small], Demonic Beast Knowledge, Magic User, Memory Increase [small]

And thanks to Self-Evolution, I had completely recovered.

[Okay, then what should I do now?]

I had planned to go back to the pedestal after I was done fighting, but...

The sun was still high up in the sky.

And the mysterious forest was right in front of me.

The forest area that surrounded Area 5.

I thought it was too early to investigate, but...

[What should I do?]

I'm not damaged, and I have time. It's okay to go there, isn't it?

[I'm already all the way here and going back without doing anything would be wasteful.]

I spontaneously decided to explore the outer portion of the Area.

I examined my situation before suddenly flying into the forest.

I used Night Vision and Sense Heat.

[Hmm, is nothing there...?]

It seemed like there were lots of animals but nearly no demonic beasts.

There were goblins at least, but...they're not worth chasing around.

[The only demonic beasts here are small fries.]

This place did give me an Area 6 feel, so I kept on guard on the off chance that any mythical creatures that appeared.

But it wasn't any different from Area 1.

It felt like this was all pointless.

[Geez, I got all excited for no reason.]

I felt stupid for being so on guard and ready to run away.

[That's enough for now. I'm going to go back.]

I flew through the air with the Telekinetic Catapult.

Below me was a normal forest. I couldn't feel any traces of any large demonic beasts.

[Oh, open place found.]

I saw an area bereft of trees in the middle of the forest.

I changed the direction I was going with Telekinesis and landed in the meadow.

And——I stuck my blade in there.

[Great, landing successful!]

Sometimes when I use the Telekinetic Catapult Movement Technique, my body tilts

and I end up landing hilt first or crashing side first into the ground.

When that happens, it doesn't do any damage to me, but they are failed landings.

And the times when I sink my blade into the ground are successful landings. It somehow made me feel better.

It was easy to use Telekinesis right before landing to land cleanly. But whether I landed successfully or not, for the fun of it I usually let gravity take over as I fell. It was one of the few forms of entertainment I had besides hunting.

The ground on my blade felt like clay. I could feel the clay sticking wetly onto my blade.

[Okay, I should go fly again... Huh?]

My body wasn't moving.

Was the clay-like dirt sticking to me more than I thought?

I activated Telekinesis with a little more force.

[N-no way... Telekinesis won't activate?]

At the same time that Telekinesis activated, it was forcibly canceled.

With things like this, I needed to use all of my strength.

I put in all the mana I possible could and used Telekinesis.

Fwwwp.

The soft sound of steam escaping.

And nothing happened.

[Damn, is it impossible?]

I could tell that my mana was being absorbed by the ground.

The huge amount of mana I used disappeared almost instantly.

[Then how about this?]

I used a skill.

My plan was to use Vibration Fang to shake my blade and make some space between my blade and the earth.

But Vibration Fang didn't activate either.

Then what if I shoot Air Missile from my blade and use the air pressure to send me flying?

No activation whatsoever.

I'll send myself flying from the ground with fire magic!

No, it did not activate.

[Ah...what the heck~]

I stopped trying to escape for now and looked around the area.

But the demonic beasts from the plains must not enter the forest because of this mana absorption. The stronger the demonic beast, the more important mana was to their daily activities, so if they come into this forest carelessly, they might not even be able to move. Like me.

[My only solace is that I don't feel hunger...]

I did a few more tests later, but none of my skills that could move me activated.

It wasn't absorbing the mana from my blade, so as long as I didn't use skills for no reason, I wouldn't be stuck in here for lack of ability.

There was no major problem with my use of the mana in my blade to see.

But something dawned on me after a few hours passed.

[My MP isn't recovering at all.]

It must be because the mana in the air here is thin. My MP didn't recover on its own.

I still had over half of it left, but it seemed best to not waste it.

This is dangerous. There was now no way for me to get free by myself.

Ah, what do I do...

Four days passed like that. Of course, nothing changed.

I spent the first day looking for a skill that could help me escape, but I immediately reached an unsatisfactory conclusion.

Because I couldn't emit any mana to the outside, I also couldn't use attack-type skills, magic, and Telepathy

My only hopes were that either something would pass by me and pull me out or a natural disaster would send me flying.

The best outcome would be that a human pulls me out.

Ten days passed with me stuck in the ground. I am sorry. I was unable to understand reality. Now I don't care if my wielder isn't a human. I apologize to all the goblins that I killed. I will no longer call you all experience points. So please, I beg of you, someone save me. If you pull me out of the ground, I will follow you for the rest of my life. Be it a goblin or a zombie, anything is fine. Please.

One month later. Aah, anyone is fine so pick me up. I'm begging you! I'm a high caliber sword. I'm basically a magic sword. I'm saying there aren't that many swords that can think and move on their own. I can even cook and I have skills. Seriously. If you want, I can also use points to raise their levels. Here, watch. I can get Cooking 10 just like this.

<Leveled up to Cooking 10. Bonus added to status and the cooking skill>

<New title added as a class bonus>

I also have Dismantle. It's convenient. I can level this one up too. Now, to level 10!

<Leveled up to Dismantle 10. Bonus added to status and the Dismantle skill>

I also have Appraisal. I can level this one up as well. I increased it by one level. Isn't that awesome? My attack is high too. And my Sword Wielding and Sword Techniques are both at level 7. I'll increase my magic skills too. I made fire magic 10! How's that?

<Fire Magic 10 acquired. Blaze Magic 1 added to skills>

You see! Even better than I thought. Next are my stat boosting skills!

<Wielder Stat Boost [Medium] acquired>

Now I can make my wielder way stronger. How's that? Picking me up isn't such a bad idea, now is it? And this skill is———.

“——...Ack!”

Ahh, I was so starved for human interaction that I had an auditory hallucination. This may be the end for me.

“Hey——! ...There's a——ack!”

Huh? Was that really a hallucination?

Thump thump thump thump!

I could feel slight vibrations from the ground.

What could that sound me?

“It's still——this way——.”

"Oh...shit! What the——."

Those were definitely human voices!

All right, humans are here!

Thank you, God!

Come on, I'm over here! There's a sword stuck in the ground right here. Don't I look just like a legendary sword? So pick me up! PLEASE!

Thump thump thump thump!

The vibrations were coming from a wagon's wheels.

A covered wagon appeared in the forest.

Isn't it going too fast? If it turns a corner at that speed, it'll—.

B-b-boom!

Uwah! Are the people inside it okay? But why were they in such a hurry? It seemed like something was chasing them.

Because I couldn't even use Telepathy, all I could do was watch.

As I was worrying about the people inside the wagon, some people crawled out of it.

Phew, they're all safe.

Are they merchants? They didn't look like warriors, but they didn't look like ordinary people either. They had cloth wrapped around their heads and well-made clothes on. The slightly grubby overcoats must be from their long travels.

A short man that looked like their lackey came out with a couple of others.

The people the lackey brought with him looked...how should I put it...awful.

They had on obviously unwashed, ragged cloths tied onto their bodies with string; it

couldn't even be called clothes. Their hair was in a mess and on their necks were big collars.

[They must be slaves. Are there slaves in this world as well?]

"Hey, you and the slaves pick up the bags!"

"Yes sir, I'll tell them to right away! Hurry up and do what he said! Pick up the bags!"

"Uuuu..."

"Aahhh..."

"Hurry up, you retards!"

Uwah. He's trash. Human trash.

The short man had the slaves pick up the heavy bags by whipping them.

It didn't sit right with me to just watch.

"Hurry! It-it's coming!"

It? What in the world is chasing them?

The thing that made them hurry so much appeared.

"Heeeeek! It's here!"

"Grrrrrrr"

It was a two-headed bear, a demonic beast.

CHAPTER 2

THE SWORD AND THE GIRL MET

The slave traders and the slaves were in a panic.

Because of the appearance of the two-headed bear that was chasing them.

The slave traders' wagon was attacked in the forest by the demonic beast. That's probably what happened.

The slave traders and their lackey forced the slaves to quickly pick up the bags.

And they gave a different order to the other slaves.

“Slaves, stop that thing!”

They were probably planning on running away while the slaves were doing that.

The slaves didn't even have any weapons. Telling them to stop it was the same as telling them to slow it down by being its food. The slaves knew that as well.

But the slaves that had already turned their backs to run away stopped in their tracks and ran towards the bear.

“No~!”

“I don't want to die!”

The slaves ran screaming to their deaths at the hands of the bear demonic beast.

Seeing them like that, I realized that the slaves couldn't disobey the slave traders. Are they being controlled by a spell or something? It was probably an effect of their identical collars. I felt a faint trace of magic from them. I could have sensed things more clearly if this place weren't absorbing my mana...

Just as the mana absorption didn't extend to inside my body, it didn't interfere with

the collars' compulsion. If the absorption was that strong, then all the mana would have been sucked out of my body.

"Kuwaaaah!"

"Uwaaagh!"

The male slave was sent flying by the bear's strike.

All it did was swing its front paw and it sent the two halves of the slave flying.

Even if it was a low-ranked monster, it wasn't something the slaves could beat when they didn't have even a single piece of decent equipment. The slaves were utterly helpless against that raging mass of demonic beast.

At this rate, the slaves would be annihilated in less than a few minutes.

I desperately wanted to help but there was nothing I could do.

Because I couldn't talk to them.

All I could do was watch the pieces-of-trash slave traders run away.

Shit! If only someone would pick me up.

"Kuwaaaaaaaaahhhh!"

"Guwaahh!"

Great, the slave trader's lackey was sent flying by the bear's charge. Serves him right!

Isn't there any way to save the slaves and only the slaves?

As I was thinking that, a person's shadow appeared in front of me.

It was a slave girl.

The girl was probably under the command of the lackey that just died. The command was lifted after he was killed by the bear and let the slaves move freely.

But my gaze was fixed not on the girl's face, nor her dirty appearance, nor her messy hair, but what was above all that.

There were ears. Cat ears!

There were animal ears on top of her head! She was a cat girl.

She had fluffy ears!

My amazement caused me to forget for a moment the gruesome scene before me. Because these were one of the treasures of the world: cat ears. I couldn't help but be amazed.

Aah, damn it! I wish I could talk with her!

Little girl, pick me up. And let me touch those cat ears! No, wait. How can I touch them if I'm a sword? With Telekinesis? No, no, since I can feel things, if I rub the flat of my blade against them—.

In that time, the girl clung to me. And pulled.

Even though she was just told to die, she was still trying to live. Even in this hopeless situation, she didn't give up her life. I wanted to be used by a young lady like her.

[...Hup.]

The girl pulled even harder.

Yeah! Pull me out!

But I was stuck in the ground even deeper than I thought. The clay-like dirt sticking to my blade had become a disaster, stopping me from being easily pulled out.

She looked about twelve or thirteen years old. I could tell by her thin frame that she had never been given a proper meal.

That girl couldn't pull out the sword with those weak arms.



You can do it! C'mon, you can do it! No wait, first look behind you!

The bear had inexplicably lumbered towards the girl.

What about the other slaves? Did the bear already..the poor slaves were mercilessly killed and their corpses entered my sight.

The only one left was the girl.

[Pull me out!]

"A voice?"

[C-can you hear my voice?]

"Who is that?"

[I'm the sword. The sword you're trying to pul out.]

"...You surprised me."

[You don't look surprised at all...]

"I was."

[More importantly, the bear is coming this way! C'mon girl, pull me out!]

Apparently, I could use Telepathy even in this place as long as her hand made contact. And she seemed like the expressionless & quiet type of character. I didn't dislike it.

But the important thing right now was the bear!

The girl grunted and pulled.

Du-du.

[You moved me a little!]

"Uu—un."

[Harder!]

Du-du-du.

[Just a little left!]

“Guuuu.”

Swing!

[You pulled me out!]

“What a pretty sword.”

[Thanks! But now's not the time for that!]

“Right.”

[Can you fight?]

“A little.”

I checked the girl's status.

Name: No Name Age: 12 years old

Race: Beastfolk. Black Cat

Job: None

Status: Slave

Lv: 3

HP: 19 MP: 10 Strength: 9 Agility: 16

Skills: Sword Wielding 1, Night Vision, Ability to Skin Prey, Directional Sense

It really is just a little! But that was okay.

[Equip me!]

“I already did.”

[Stronger, really think that you want to equip me!]

“Okay.”

<No Name was registered as the wielder>

Great, now I was able to see for the first time how Skill Sharing would work.

<No Name has gained multiple titles>

[Huh? All of a sudden?]

Looks like...I can use Appraisal.

The girl acquired four titles: Flame Arts User, Cooking Master, Dismantling Master, and Skill Collector. It seemed that after skill level 10, a title related to that skill gets added. So there's a benefit to improving each skill. Skill Collector seemed to increase the efficiency of gaining skill levels.

Well, that wouldn't be of any help now, so I'll check it later.

[Fight. You'll be able to fight.]

“Un.”

[I'm going to defeat that thing. Keep that in your head. And trust your senses and swing the sword!]

The Sword Wielding skill should take care of the rest somehow.

The opponent was a low-rank monster.

There was no way she could lose with a Sword Wielding of level 7. There was even status boosting effects on top of that.

“...Un, okay.”

[Great, good girl.]

“...I’m going!”

To describe the girl’s movements as beautiful would be more than enough. She moved like an adept swordswoman, closing the distance to the bear and stabbing it accurately through the heart. I didn’t feel any resistance; as if she had stabbed tofu.

“Huh?”

[What do you think? Wasn’t that easy?]

“...Because of the sword?”

[Yep. Make sure to say thanks.]

“Un. Thanks.”

The girl was about to put me back in the ground and I quickly stopped her.

[Wait! Don’t put me in the ground!]

“?”

[The ground here makes me unable to do anything. So hold me for a while.]

“Uuun?”

[You can’t?]

“He’s probably going to come get me.”

[Are you talking about the slave trader?]

“Un.”

No way. I was lucky enough to meet a fluffy-eared cat girl. I’m saying I want to be wielded by her!

If the trader finds me, for all I know he might sell me to some rich prick and I might end up sealed in a hell even worse than this one.

[Hey, want to run away?]

“Can’t. I can’t disobey him because of this collar.”

[So it’s a magical tool?]

“Slave collar. We can’t disobey any order. I tried to kill them multiple times but I failed.”

[Are you saying you tried to kill the slave traders?]

“Un. Tried to kill them and run away.”

Whooa. She’s way more hungry & dangerous than I thought. But I didn’t dislike it.

[But you failed because of the collar?]

“Un.”

I saw a man appear from the forest while I was talking with the girl.

It was the slave trader.

“Only one of you’s alive?! And all of the pots are broken! Almost everything’s gone. Shit!”

He didn’t look like he was mourning the deaths of the slaves or the lackey at all. Instead, he was saddened by the destruction of his cargo. Geez, this guy was almost

“...”

“Are you the one who killed the Twin Head Bear?”

“Yes.”

“How did you...what’s that sword?”

“I found it.”

“Hey, give it to me.”

“...Okay.”

“The hell’re you looking at me like that for? Hmph!”

“Awuk. Sor-ry.”

No way. That man just suddenly slapped the girl.

“Tch, how dare a beast look at me with those dead eyes.”

He hit her again! And it seemed like this was normal.

The slave trader took the sword from the curled up girl.

“Hooo. What a beautiful sword. Maybe it’ll make up for all the damages?”

The man ignored the girl who was groaning in pain and began to appraise me.

“Hey, beast. Get whatever goods are useable and carry them on your back. Then we’re going to the town.”

The girl was unable to disobey the man’s words because of the slave collar. She shakily stood up despite the pain she must have felt.

That son of a... He’s pissing me off. Really pissing me off. I was on the verge of murdering him.

Shit! I would’ve killed him already if only this place wasn’t absorbing my mana!

“Kuhagh?”

While I was thinking that, I tried using Telekinesis and it worked. Teheh.

No, it seemed that the mana absorption weakened a little if I got away from the

ground.

When I was stuck in the ground, my magic was absorbed instantaneously, but now there was about a one second delay.

So when I thought that I wanted to kill the slave trader and I used Telekinesis with all my might, my body sprung up with alacrity. I stabbed completely through the slave trader's face, even splitting apart his skull and brains splattered everywhere.

Huh? Looks like I made a whoopsie?

Hmm. Maybe because he was trash? Or because I'm a sword? I didn't feel any guilt. It was the same feeling as when I first killed a goblin.

[Hm, what should we do now?]

“Un?”

[Let's check the situation for now. Stay calm.]

“I am calm.”

[You're way too composed.]

She was way more “My Pace” than I first thought. I could see her becoming a star player (big shot?).

[You're my wielder.]

“I am.”

[I'm basically a magic sword so I'm...pretty strong.]

“Un.”

[So I want you to use me in the future as well. As a sword. I don't want to end up on a shelf somewhere. Do you have any plans on using me? By that, I mean do you have any plans on fighting demonic beasts by using me? That's the gist of it.]

I couldn't force such a life onto this girl.

She's the first wielder I met and I really wanted her to use me, but I'll give up if she says no.

"I do. I really do."

She gave an immediate answer. She looked heroic as she gripped me tight and raised me towards the sky.

"I'm going to get stronger. For sure."

She said that intensely; there must have been some kind of circumstances.

[Do you have a goal?]

"I'm going to break through the wall."

[The wall? What's that?]

She told me that beastfolk can evolve just like demonic beasts.

There are all kinds of conditions, but beastfolk admire and respect their evolved brethren.

But the majority of beastfolk die before they evolve.

That meant it was that difficult to evolve.

And because no one of the girl's race, the Black Cats, have ever evolved, even the other beastfolk treat them like the dregs of society.

The girl's parents also tried to evolve, but their strength failed them during the height of their adventure. After that, the girl who had been left behind was abducted by the slave traders.

The girl said she inherited their wish and that her goal was to evolve.

[Yeah, yeah! That's a good story! I really like it! I'll definitely get you to evolve!]

“Really?”

[Yes! First, let’s train super hard and get stronger. And then we’ll go to a dungeon, level up there, and then evolve!]

“Thanks.”

[Ah c’mom, it’s nothing much! After all, a wielder and her sword aren’t strangers! Um, come to think of it, what’s your name?]

I had still not asked my precious wielder her name.

But the girl’s answer was as I expected.

“Don’t have one.”

[So you really don’t have a name?]

“Don’t have one.”

It did say she didn’t have a name, but she really didn’t have one.

[How?]

If she had parents, then there was no way she didn’t have a name.

“After the slave contract, your name disappears.”

[Huuh? What’s that mean?]

[Some owners want to give their slaves new names. So my name’s gone.]

I see. That must mean the contract took away her ability to say her name. It reminded me somehow of Yubasa taking away Chihiro’s name (*tn: Spirited Away reference*).

“I was eight when I became a slave and my name disappeared.”

Then that meant for the four years she was a slave, she never gave up her goal. Even

though her life must have terrible. That made me respect her a little more.

[I see... Then, what was your name before that?]

“Fran.”

It was the same name as the dog I raised long ago, but it wasn’t bad. And it was easy for me to say.

[Hmm. Then your name is Fran.]

“It’s okay?”

[Why? Is something wrong?]

“No. That’s not it. My name is Fran.”

She looked happy. Her tail was sticking straight up and she was nodding her head.

Now talking to her was easier.

But the next thing Fran said surprised me.

“What’s your name?”

[Huh? Mine?]

“Yes.”

I hadn’t talked with anyone since I reincarnated so I didn’t have a name. I hadn’t thought about it to an almost pathetic degree.

I couldn’t remember my name before reincarnating, and my status said my name was Unknown.

Shit! I would’ve thought of a really cool one if I knew this was going to happen!

[Um...]

“Don’t have one?”

[Yes.]

“Well then, I’ll give you one.”

I mean, that sounded okay. Since she’s my wielder.

I’ll probably get closer to her if Fran calls me by a name she likes.

I didn’t feel picky about it so any name was good.

“Mmmm...?”

[Badump badump.]

“Hmmm...?”

[What could it be...?]

“Guuuu... I decided.”

[Oh! Okay! So? What is it?]

“Master.”

[What?]

“Master.”

[Why?]

“You said that you would train me. So, you’re Master.”

[Ah, did you come up with anything else? Is that it?]

“No. I am in your care, Master.”

<Name has been set to Master>

Uwah! The notice descended! No way, my name's Master? For real?

“Do you hate it?”

Her lack of expression didn't change at all, but there was a slight sign of worry in her face. Though it was very slight.

There was no way I could say I hate it if she makes that face!

[I don't hate it at all! What a good name!]

“Un.”

And that is how my name became Master. How should I put it; I thought it was a peculiar name for a sword, but it didn't matter to me because Fran liked it. That's what I told myself.

[Then what should we do now? The slave trader's dead, but what happened to the contract? Is it gone now?]

“No. The collar didn't come off.”

Fran pointed at the collar.

We needed to do something about it.

[And we can't break it?]

“No. It breaks, I die.”

[Huh? For real?]

“For real.”

Dang, that was close. And I was about to cut it apart.

[What can we do to end the contract?]

“Tear apart the contract document.”

[The contract document. Could this guy have it?]

“Un. I’ll look for it.”

Fran started to search the slave trader’s corpse.

But what if it’s not here? I mean, what if it’s hidden somewhere else?

But my worries were unnecessary.

“It’s here.”

Fran took out a sheaf of parchment from the slave trader’s breast pocket. One of those was Fran’s contract document.

Was this messy bundle what was forcing Fran into being a slave?

Dealing with this will free Fran.

[Let’s tear it apart!]

“Un!”

Fran clutched the bundle and grunted from exertion.

But it didn’t tear at all.

She tried time after time, but Fran couldn’t tear it apart with her strength alone.

“...I can’t.”

[Then let’s cut it. Put the contract on the ground.]

“Un.”

Fran lifted me above her head.

And swung me down with gusto.

[Nice! It worked!]

And right after the contracts were split in half.

Crack!

The slave collar fell off by itself.

[Whoooa! Do you feel okay?]

“I’m okay. No problem.”

I didn’t feel any mana coming from the slave collar. It looked like the contract was gone.

“Thanks.”

Whoooa. The cat girl is embarrassed! It was nice to see that.

But it was cute. And at a closer look, she was a pretty girl. After she grows up, she’ll attract the attention of everyone near her.

No way. I cannot allow that. If you want to date Fran, you’ll have to beat me first!

“Look at this.”

While I was getting angry by myself, Fran found something.

It was a pouch that the slave trader had.

[Is something in there?]

I looked inside. Yep, there were multiple things in there.

I first saw multiple coins. I didn’t know how the currency worked in this world so I had no idea how much this was worth, but they looked like silver and copper coins so they likely weren’t worth a lot.

And a few tools. Surprisingly, they looked like magical tools.

A torch magical tool that created fire. A water bottle that made drinkable water. A bracelet that gave a small boost to strength, and more.

They weren't amazing, but they looked fun. The truth is, I wanted to use them but they wouldn't work in this place because of the mana absorption.

I couldn't calm down in this mana absorption area so I had her leave it.

[I don't know how far the mana absorption extends to, but let's leave the forest for now.]

"Okay."

We left after she found a knife, cooking tools, clothes, and other useful looking things from the wagon. Of course, I stored the bear as well. I activated Dimensional Storage for a moment.

And Fran tied my blade to her back by using the cover of the wagon and the belt of the lackey.

Fran had a small build so I was very close to touching the ground. I needed to ask her to do something about that.

Also, because Fran had what were basically rags around her body, she put on some shabby clothes from the wagon. I suppose she changed from looking like a slave to looking like a street urchin.

[Then shall we go?]

"Un."

Fran was surprised at the increase in her physical abilities that happened because she equipped me.

Fran was taken aback after we left the forest in less than thirty minutes.

"Amazing. Master is amazing."

[Hahaha. Aren't I?]

"Un."

[Then what shall we do now? Do you have a destination in mind?]

"Uuun, there's a town."

[Near here?]

"That way."

[So it's that way but...do you know how far away it is?]

"Not really?"

Anyway, it seemed that she had heard by chance that the slave traders were taking them to the east. Because Fran had the Directional Sense skill, she was able to tell what direction she was going. And that is how the vague answer of 'That way' came about.

[Then let's go that way.]

And so, we took off with the slight feeling that our journey was taking off.

I realized while on the way to the town that, because my Appraisal level went up, there was a little something added to my status window.

I gained the mysterious title, Mana Conductivity.

I asked Fran about it, but she didn't know.

Does it increase my mana conducting efficiency? What does it do?

It also says that I'm an "A" but I had no way of knowing if that was good or bad.

Next, the way status displayed my skills changed.

I was able to categorize skills based on their type. So it became a little easier to look at my skills.

And it looked like, because I maxed out Fire Magic, I gained a bonus line in my status.

It was Superior Fire Skill.

After reaching level 10, the bonus changed a normal skill into a special, Superior one. It looked like it was excluded from Set Skills and only I was able to use it—I couldn't share it with Fran.

If I use ten or more Self-Evolution Points, I'll need to choose how I use them carefully.

I also told Fran about myself while we were on the road. I didn't have anything to hide from her. I'll have to keep my mouth shut to hide this from others, though.

I told her about the fact that I used to be a human, that I grow by absorbing magic crystals, that I could share skills and raise her stats because she was my wielder, and more.

“Magic crystals...”

[That's right. Well, it hasn't been that long since I ranked up, so it'll take a while.]

“Un.”

[Ah, hey, what are you doing?]

“Un.”

Clink clink.

Fran took the magic crystal from a Fanged Rat she found along the way and pressed it hard against my blade. She probably wanted me to absorb it. Though the way she was doing it was violent.

[Wait! I need to cut it! Put it against the edge!]

“Like this?”

[Yeah, exactly.]

“You really absorbed it.”

[That’s how I get stronger. We can sell their loot, so let’s also hunt a lot of demonic beasts.]

“Un. Okay.”

And after that, I tested out Telepathy. Since I was using it for the first time with Fran, there was still a lot of things I didn’t know.

It seemed like it created an area that made two-way communication possible. If I limited the skill to only connect to Fran, then I was able to talk privately with her. Also, I would likely be able to increase the range to let me talk to everyone in an area. We tested it out on a rabbit that Fran caught, and both Fran and the rabbit could hear my voice through Telepathy.

But Fran’s Telepathy didn’t reach the rabbit. It was probably so that others couldn’t use Telekinesis to communicate while excluding me. It was a skill meant to allow me to communicate with anyone from anywhere.

Our journey was progressing without a hitch.

The plains must have been a special environment because outside of the forest, there were no particularly strong demonic beasts. They were about the same as those in Area 2.

I did the cooking.

Because, back when I was going crazy, I improved my Cooking skill. I was able to use cooking tools without a problem because of Telekinesis, and I was also able to use ingredients. It was the easiest thing in the world for a sword like me to slice and peel things. I was easily able to make fire or water with magic.

The ingredients were the demonic beasts I had kept in my Dimensional Storage. I was able to tell which demonic beasts were edible, maybe thanks to the Cooking skill.

Fran could probably cook as well because she had the same skills as me, but...

I wanted to be in charge of the cooking. Because it was my duty as a guardian.

As a precaution, I equipped the skills Poison Resistance, Enhanced Absorption, Enhanced Digestion, Gluttony, and other skills like that. Gluttony was a skill that let the user gain strength from food after it's absorbed. I had no way of knowing how much of an effect it would have, but it couldn't hurt to have it equipped.

Fran's status had changed to become like this. The shared skills we had in common didn't show up.

Name: Fran Age: 12 years old

Race: Beastfolk. Black Cat

Job: None

Status: Slave

Lv: 3

HP: 39 MP: 25 Strength: 24 Agility: 46

Skills: Sword Wielding 1, Night Vision, Ability to Skin Prey, Directional Sense

Titles: Dismantling Master, Skill Collector, Flame Arts User, Cooking Master

Her status was overwhelmingly stronger than the goblins.

She was about equal to the demonic beasts in Area 3 or the Evil Goblins.

Thanks to Wielder Status Boost [small] that I acquired a while ago, each of her stats went up because of skills like Strength Boost [small].

I thought this ability was a cheat when she was only level 3. She would have no problem beating any low-rank monsters.

It'll probably change based on the set skills, but I decided to always keep Sword Wielding, Fire Magic, and status boosting skills set. I also got used to changing the Set Skills. I could probably even change the Set Skills even during combat.

The problem was money.

I was told that the currency in this world is commonly called gil. But we got two silver coins and twenty-four copper coins from the slave trader. Altogether, it was 224 gil. I couldn't tell if it was enough for a night at an inn or not; this conundrum could not be solved.

I called it a conundrum because Fran didn't know the current prices in society. She probably only had a rough idea.

First, we needed to make money. So, we can buy armor or the necessities for exploring.

I had a solution for now. The corpses of the demonic beasts I had put in my Dimensional Storage.

According to Fran, selling the loot from demonic beasts is explorers' main source of income. I will likely make at least some money by selling the loot in my storage.

So, before storing them, I needed to dismantle them and sort out what loot was sellable.

But if a girl like Fran carried around the high rank demonic beasts' loot, she might attract attention, so I planned to sell the less strong monsters' loot first.

Well, this was all stuff I could figure out when we arrived at the town though.

[Great. That's settled.]

We were currently camping out. Fran was dismantling the loot.

I realized this just a moment ago, but after being registered as my wielder, Fran had access to our shared skills even when I moved away from her. Her status boosts also stayed in effect. Even if I wasn't right next to her, Fran could still use the Dismantle skill.

Fran, with a knife in one hand, was diligently dismantling the demonic beast's corpse that she had laid down on the ground.

I was creating an odor-nullifying barrier to stop any demonic beasts from smelling the blood and coming here. Fran also put up a barrier herself. It seemed like she was

getting skilled with magic skills in the blink of an eye.

I was preparing a meal for Fran. I made a stew with the pot and ingredients from the slave traders' wagon and meat from the demonic beasts. I also added in the medicinal plants she had picked along the way so it was even perfectly nutritious. In addition, because of my Cooking 10, it tasted perfect—I mean, it should taste perfect. It really was a shame that I couldn't taste it.

We'll likely share the work like this in the future, more or less.

With me cooking and keeping watch, and Fran being in charge of dismantling.

I ate the magic crystals, and Fran would either sell or eat everything besides that.

[Fran, all done.]

“Un.”

[And of course, wash your hands.]

“——Aqua Create.”

Fran washed her hands with the water she created. Mana-wise, this was no problem.

She could use my MP pool, so she could make as much water as she wanted without it being a problem.

[Are you finished dismantling?]

“More or less. But I couldn't do that one.”

[Ahh, the tortoise.]

At the opposite end of Fran's gaze was the Blast Turtle's conspicuous corpse. Even with a dismantling skill of 10, it was impossible to cut through that hard shell with an ordinary knife.

Well, it is an evolved demonic beast, so it couldn't be helped.

Yesterday, she also couldn't dismantle the Tyrant Saber-toothed Tiger. Mostly because of the tools.

[Looks like that's up to me today as well.]

“Please.”

[Yeah. Leave it to me. Fran, eat.]

“Un. Thanks.”

I should hurry and dismantle it before Fran's done.

It was three days after I met Fran.

We continued to walk with the town as our destination.

I was wrapped up in the wagon's cover to not be noticed by others, and Fran kept me on her back. Because there was no excuse we could give if somebody saw me floating in the air.

[Hey, can we enter the town without a problem?]

“Un?”

[I mean, is there an entry toll or some kind of identification card that we need?]

“Don't know.”

Fran shook her head from side to side. Cute—.

No, no. This wasn't the time for that.

Fran had probably never gone through the entry procedures of entering a town because she was a slave. And thus, we had almost no information.

[We might be able to gain some more information if there was someone to ask.]

For the past three days of our journey, we had yet to find even a trace of other people.

But why was that? There weren't any peddlers or travelers, let alone thieves.

"Because this isn't a highway."

[Huh? What do you mean?]

"This is a side road split off from the highway."

The slave traders probably crossed through that dangerous area full of demonic beasts to save some time.

And how unfortunate for them to meet their demise after being attacked.

If only they hadn't dragged the slaves along with them.

[Huh? There're highways?]

Though there was no way there would be a lot of people in that field infested with demonic beasts.

[Where is it?]

"It'll show up soon if I keep going."

[That'd be great.]

"It'll be okay. Probably."

And four hours passed.

During that time, we walked carefree, hunting rabbit-like animals or talking about what to spend Self-Evolution Points on next.

We discussed a variety of options, from increasing our skill levels to getting status boosting skills, but in the end we decided to acquire Nullify Senses and Memory Increase .

Nullify Senses, as its name suggests, is a skill that blocks my target from sensing

anything. According to Fran, talking swords are rare. So I acquired the skill to use in case of a difficult encounter.

Memory Increase is a useful skill that increases the number of Set Skills I can have. Because one of our strong points was the diversity of our skills, increasing the number of skills we could set directly improved our combat ability. I needed to acquire it.

We continued talking about this looking good and that looking good until we discovered the long-awaited highway.

[Yes, it's the road!]

It was a slightly better road than the beasts' road that was just a path with the grass pulled out. But due to constant traffic, the ground was imprinted with wheel marks. That was without a doubt a road.

Thanks to Fran's Directional Sense, we continued to walk towards the town.

"Ah, life form detected."

[It doesn't seem like a human.]

We were able to perceive the size and movements of our targets with the Sense Traces skill. I could tell that they were probably goblins, as I had sensed them multiple times before.



“Get them?”

[For now, anyway. I don’t know if we can sell their loot, but I can absorb their magic crystals.]

“Okay.”

Fran nodded her head, and she ran off the highway.

Because I already equipped combat boosting skills, she ran between the trees like the wind.

“They’re there.”

The goblins hid themselves in the forest that was at the edge of the highway. They were likely waiting for someone to come along the road.

There were three of them.

Fran crept up silently behind the goblins and attacked them.

“Hup.”

“Keek?”

The one that Fran had slashed stood unsteadily on its feet then collapsed.

“Haagh!”

She felled the two remaining goblins with the sword after taking it out of the goblin’s corpse. She had become faster with her techniques because she had grown more accustomed to the skills.

The goblins likely hadn’t even realized anything was wrong with their bodies.

Because the fight was over before the first goblin’s body had even hit the ground.

“Master, the rest is yours.”

[Yeah, leave it to me.]

After I absorbed their magic crystals, I cut off the goblins' horns, the only usable loot on them. Fran told me that she had heard that once.

It was dangerous to leave the corpses near the highway as they could attract large demonic beasts, so I put them in my Dimensional Storage.

“Master, there’re goblins over there.”

[More of them?]

“What shall we do?”

[We have to go that way anyway, so want to get rid of them?]

“Un.”

Fran once again ran at them. But once she ran forward, a completely unexpected sight entered our vision.

“Shit! Go away, you damn goblins!”

“Kikiki.”

“Gururuah.”

A wagon was being attacked by the goblins.

There were six of them. While there appeared to only be one person on the wagon.

[The goblins again, really?]

“I want to help.”

[Got it. Do your best.]

She once again launched a silent sneak attack from behind.

She sliced three of them with Sword Technique: **Triple Thrust**. Though it was weak as a swift trio of stabs would be expected to be, it was more than enough against the goblins.

“I-I’m saved!”

“Kiii!”

“Shut up.”

The goblins sensed the threat that Fran’s sudden appearance posed. But Fran cut them down without mercy.

The sole remaining goblin turned to run away, but Fran threw me at it, killing it.

Thanks to the Throwing skill, I had cut clean through its stomach. I had planned on secretly changing my trajectory if the throw was off, but there was no need for that.

“Th-thank you, young lady. You saved me.”

“Un.”

“But you sure are strong. Are you here by yourself?”

“.....”

“No, you don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to.”

Though Fran was simply not talkative, he must have mistaken her behavior for her not wanting to talk.

The truth was, I was glad that she didn’t rashly give him information. Deciding to allow this misunderstanding about Fran to stand, I gave Fran instructions with Telepathy.

‘Okay.’

“Um, if it’s okay with you, would you like to ride on my wagon? You’re going to Alessa, right?”

It seemed that the name of our destination is Alessa.

But this man; he looked weak, but he wasn't a fool.

He may have offered a ride to his savior, Fran, out of the goodness of his heart to repay her for saving him from the goblins, but he also wanted her to act as his escort.

We needed information anyway, so we decided to take up his offer. But of course, the debt for saving his life wasn't that cheap.

I told Fran what to say.

"We'll escort you up to the town."

"Ah, yeah, please do."

Hmph. There was a bitter smile on his face.

"We will escort you for free in exchange for the information we want."

"Hahahaha. This is fun. I like it! Get on."

"Un."

"I'm Randel. And you?"

"Fran."

"Then I hope our travels go well, Fran-san."

We didn't forget to collect the goblins' horns before we left.

We asked the man a question immediately. Well, it was Fran who asked him, though.

"Can I sell goblin horns?"

"Goblin horns are extremely cheap. They can act as a mana catalyst, but their quality's the absolute worst."

I see. So gathering them wasn't worth it.

But Randel wasn't done talking yet.

"But since the Adventurer's Guild encourages destroying any Demon race monsters as soon as they're found, they can fetch a decent price there."

Appraisal also encouraged me to destroy them on sight.

Come to think of it, it's a really arbitrary description.

It clearly had a massive grudge against the goblins. But who wrote the description in the first place? A god? Then it was probably a god that got rid of the grim reaper. Because the contents were so obviously biased.

The goblins might even feel the same way about humans, that humans are evil.

Well, even so, I didn't have any complaints. Since I already killed them. If the description had said, "Though they have menacing faces, they are actually kind," then I'd definitely feel guilty. But because it said the goblins are evil, I felt like I did nothing wrong. Instead, hunting them became a matter of course.

For all I know, that was the description writer's intent. Or maybe it was trying to get me to hunt the Demon race monsters.

Could the one who wrote the description really be a god? And that connects to the man's voice I heard when I reincarnated into this world. Could that have been a god? If that was the case, then he seemed like a good person. At the very least, it didn't sound like he was trying to manipulate me. No, wait, could that have been his plan? Wait, wait, but...

Ah, stop, stop. Thinking about this while I have no information is useless. Well, it's not like this lack of information is doing me any harm, so I should stop thinking about it so hard.

"Your skill in taking down those Threat Level G goblins was superb."

"Threat Level?"

It was the first time I'd heard that. Based on the context, is it a term used to indicate a demonic beast's strength or rank?

"You don't know what that is?"

After that, Randel explained what Threat Levels are. Well, since we didn't have anything else to talk about, he explained in detail.

Adventurer Ranks

G: Rookies; treated like temps. Not yet true adventurers.

F: Newcomers; receive training. Treated like adventurers for the time being.

E: Does work for him or herself. Okay to proclaim oneself to be an adventurer.

D: Mid-tier adventurers. Can be party leaders.

C: Veterans. Appear superhuman to common people.

B: Elites. Not unusual for the strongest adventurer in a small guild to be this rank.

A: Heroes; there are only a few in each country. Even the common people know their names. Famous to the point of being praised by bards.

S: Mythical. There are only eight in the world. Even kings bow their heads to them, and they can even give commands to guild leaders.

Demonic Beast Threat Levels

G: Small fries; an adult man can beat them. Goblin, Fanged Rat.

F: Able to destroy caravans and guards. Large Brown Bear, Five-Headed Wolf.

E: Able to destroy villages. Lesser Wyvern, Ogre.

D: Able to destroy towns. Lesser Hydra, Blast Tortoise.

C: Able to destroy large towns. Knights must mobilize right away. Tyrant Saber-Toothed Tiger, Low-ranked Demon.

B: Able to destroy nations. Crisis requiring mobilization of all a nation's troops. High-ranked Demon, High-ranked Dragon, King-tier Giant.

A: Able to destroy continents. Demon King, King-tier Dragon, Lich.

S: Global catastrophe; demonic beasts of myths. Fenrir, God-tier Dragon.

Adventurer Ranks and Threat Levels are matched so that parties of corresponding ranks can defeat a demonic beast of that level. Or adventurers can solo kill demonic beasts that are one Threat Level lower than the adventurer's rank.

Goblins were at the lowest level. But when more than five of them horde together into a mob, the Threat Level increases to F.

So that meant, since Fran just defeated the goblin mob alone, she was at least Adventurer Rank E.

“But this is the first time I’ve ever been attacked by a goblin mob on a highway.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. You see, the adventurers regularly make their rounds here.”

So there are adventurers. He also indicated that there were guilds, so it was fantasy-esque to a T. Now I couldn’t wait to get to the guild.

“Even I can take care of a goblin or two.”

As a reference, this is what Randel’s status looked like.

Name: Randel Age: 39 years old

Race: Human

Job: Merchant

Lv: 13

HP: 32 MP: 15 Strength: 20 Agility: 22

Skills: Transport 3, Carriage Driving 2, Bargaining 2, Arithmetic 5, Business 6, Spear Wielding 3, Smart Talking 2

Equipment: Spear made of scrap iron. leather breastplate, spider silk coat

Well, it didn't look like he'd lose in a one-on-one battle, but it looked like he'd be in trouble if he got surrounded. Despite being only level 4, Fran's status outshined Randel's to a spectacular degree.

"For whatever reason, the demonic beasts have been a lot more active since a month ago."

A month ago, he said. That was about the time that I attacked Area 5.

"Why?"

"Something must have happened at the Demon Wolf's Plain."

"Demon Wolf's Plain?"

"You don't know what that is? It's an A rank demonic area to the east of here."

"Is it well known?"

"Of course. It's not one of the top ten, but it's still rank A."

Demonic area was the term for things like dungeons, territories that demonic beasts controlled. Each one was given a Threat Level from G to S, and that rank A one was second from the top.

The only demonic areas above rank A are the top ten S rank areas, so rank A could easily be considered dangerous.

Did I go hunting there?

Come to think of it, the boss was strong.

But I became curious about something.

“Why is it called the Demon Wolf’s Plain?”

There were nearly no wolf-type demonic beasts there. Even the boss of the western region was a cat.

I had no way of knowing why it was called the Demon Wolf’s Plain.

“It’s because there’s a legend that a long, long time ago, an S rank demonic beast called Fenrir died there. They say that Fenrir’s mana remains in the middle of that plain even to this day. Because of that, apparently there’s an interesting phenomenon: the demonic beasts get weaker the closer you get to the center.”

Shockingly, what I thought was a barrier was actually the mana of Fenrir or something else. And it had already passed away.

Without that barrier, my life would’ve been a lot more hellish so I really wanted to give my thanks to Fenrir.

But could there be a connection between the place I found myself in and Fenrir? I was curious.

“People say there’s an altar or something in the middle of the plain, and there’s an object there that nobody knows the origin of. Several people went to investigate, but they said they couldn’t tell what it was.”

[Huh? Me? They didn’t know there was a sword there?]

“You’ve never heard that there was a sword there?”

“A sword? No, not that I can recall.”

[Hmm. I had thought that he could tell me where I came from, but it seems I won’t find an answer that easily.]

Randel didn’t have any more information beyond that. What a shame.

"Next to the Demon Wolf's Plain is the Forest of Draining; a special forest that absorbs mana."

I had a hard time there. It was a place I didn't want to back to.

"Thanks to that, none of the demonic beasts from the Demon Wolf's Plain go to the outside, but it's not completely unaffected by the Plain's effects. Every couple of years, the regions start fighting, or the larger demonic beasts fight each other."

I see. Could that be shift from one generation of demonic beasts to the next?

"That ends up frightening the demonic beasts that live around the Forest of Draining, and it makes them a whole lot more aggressive. Maybe there's a fight happening in one of the regions?"

That was totally my fault. Because I hunted all of the regional bosses.

Could the aftereffects of that have reached all the way here? Teheh.

Randel hesitated over whether to turn back on the highway, but then he wouldn't be able to keep the deadline for his transport request, so he decided to forge on through.

Hahaha. Sorry about that, Randel-san. As an apology, I won't try and extort more from you for being your escort. I really am sorry.

Two hours after we got on the wagon.

"Oh, there's Alessa."

I saw what looked like a wall on a far hill. It looked like a protective wall constructed around a town.

Though we could see it, it was still incredibly far away.

After two more hours on that rickety wagon, I could barely start making out the details of the wall.

Now that I was looking at it from close by, it was extremely big.

According to Randel's explanation, this was the biggest town in the area. With about ten thousand residents.

And it seemed that Alessa was the only place with a large adventurer's guild.

And that was when I realized I had forgotten to ask something important to Randel.

"How much is the entrance fee?"

"Ahh, it's 300 gil."

Bad news, we were short.

He said that everywhere but the Adventurer's Guild treated goblin horns as worthless, so what do we do?

I should ask him about all the prices while we had the chance. So that way, I could make some plans for how much to bring for next time.

"How much for a day's lodging and food? The cheapest place is fine."

"Lodging, you say. The worst inn's price was about 200 gil, I think. Of course, there's no food there."

The average meal costed 50 gil. One loaf of bread was 10 gil. The cheapest knife was 300 gil. One bath costed 20 gil.

This was the feel I got from this. 1 gil was worth about 10 yen?

One copper coin was worth 1 gil, and the denominations went copper coin, large copper coin, silver coin, large silver coin, gold coin, large gold coin, and each one was worth 10 of the coins before it.

"How much are goblin horns at the guild?"

"One pair is worth 20 gil. And they'd fetch about 5 gil from a merchant."

Cheap! Goblins are so cheap! To think that we can't even pay for lodging unless we

hunt over ten of them...

But what should we do? Even if we sold the horns from the eight goblins, we still wouldn't have the 300 gil.

Maybe I should sell the demonic beast loot I have in my Dimensional Storage?

That was what I thought, but Randel told us that he couldn't buy them.

"The goods I deal in are mostly food-stuffs and weapons. I'm not so sure when it comes to cheap, common things like goblin horns, but I can't give a professional evaluation of that loot."

Oh no, what do I do? Should I force him to buy it, even at a low price? But that's also a waste...

As I was worrying about this, my Detection picked up something new.

Further along the highway.

I had Randel slow down and we scouted ahead

There were goblins hiding in the forest. They were probably waiting to ambush someone.

We ended them in a flash with Fran's Sword Techniques and my magic.

We retrieved horns from the five goblins, when our eyes fell on one goblin's sword.

A club probably wouldn't be worth a thing, but I thought that a sword should fetch at least a small price.

[What luck. We might have 300 gil if we sell this to Randel.]

We asked Randel about it, and he bought it for 100 gil. It was more expensive than I thought.

"You're buying it for so much?"

"It may be made of bronze, but it's in good condition. It must have gotten the sword

from an adventurer recently.”

We really were lucky. And so, we were able to enter the town.

We should hold onto the goblin horns and submit them to the guild.

On the way, we hunted one more demonic beast, and we sold its loot to Randel.

It was a fifty-centimeter-long, umber beetle called Black Bug. Apparently, its carapace is used for armor for beginners. He said he knew how much this was worth, so he bought it for 20 gil. It may actually be better to focus on goblins that have weapons. Goblins were truly fated to be hunted by me.

“Yo. Randel, it’s you. You look no worse for the wear.”

“Yeah, though there were some close shaves along the way.”

“And that young lady?”

“Picked her up while on my way here. Could you take care of her entrance procedures?”

“Got it. You sure were lucky that Randel’s wagon was passing by. I bet you felt safe, since Randel is so strong.”

Randel gave a wry smile at the gatekeeper’s words. When the truth was, Fran was the one escorting Randel.

We didn’t want to attract attention, so we asked Randel to just call Fran a traveler he picked up while coming here.

“That’ll be 300 gil. That’s the entrance fee. It’s good for three days. Pay close attention to that, since you’ll have to pay again if you try and come in again after that.”

We had already heard that before. And that after becoming either legal citizens or receiving an adventurer card, there was no entrance fee.

Thus, we needed to get an adventurer card as soon as possible.

“Welcome to Alessa.”

He said there was no age restriction for joining the Adventurer's Guild. But there was an aptitude test, and if we failed to pass, then they wouldn't issue us a card.

"Then I'll be going back to my shop. Fran-san, will you be going straight to the Adventurer's Guild?

"Un."

"My shop is at the far west from there. Come by when you have some free time."

After saying that, Randel left.

He didn't ask us anything even while leaving. Completely ignorant of the ways of the world, but possessed of incredible skill, such a strange little girl was walking by herself along the highway. There was clearly a story behind this. But he didn't mention this even until the end. He was a good person.

He said he does business with adventurers, so we should meet with him when we have some money.

[Then shall we go?]

"Un."

We walked along the road that Randel directed us on that would bring us to the Adventurer's Guild.

Hmm, it really was a clean city. It was like a European medieval city.

It was nice. It absolutely oozed a fantasy feel.

And it was the first time since I came to this world that I saw so many people. That alone was enough to make me delighted.

But what was even more exciting were the extra-racial people mixed in with the humans.

Like a beastfolk man with animal ears and a tail, or a shockingly alluring, busty elf—no, a lady elf. From hirsute dwarfs to young men with what looked like insect wings on their backs, there were all manner of races walking along the street.

And among the people I just mentioned, I could spot the occasional person who looked like an adventurer.

I checked their status, and they were all definitely lower than Fran. Though there were quite a few of them that were very close.

But the number of skills we had and the skill levels were overwhelmingly higher.

The highest skill level I saw among the people I observed was an adventurer with Sword Wielding 7. I could tell that my Sword Wielding 7 was unusual.

It was possible to defeat an opponent with stronger stats if you used skills. That was something I learned first hand by fighting in the plain.

You could even say that, to at least a small degree, a difference in stats is meaningless in comparison to a difference in skills.

With that in mind, Fran would likely have no difficulty living as an adventurer.

But there was something else that weighed on my mind.

I looked at the abilities of the adventurers' equipped weapons, but...

Name: High Quality Steel Long Sword

Attack: 398 MP: 5 Durability 600

Mana Conversion Rate F

Skills: None

A longsword like me. But its attack power was leaps and bounds beyond mine. The fact that I beat it in the lines after that tidbit did nothing to comfort me. I felt that I had been defeated as a sword.

And what was even worse was the sword's material.

High quality steel.

In other words, I hadn't lost to a legendary metal like mythril or orichalcum, but to mere iron. That hit me hard.

After that, I saw tons of weapons were flaunting attack stats higher than mine.

Because about one in every five people had a weapon like that.

And the clincher was hanging at a man's hip.

Name: Mythril Alloy Dagger

Attack: 423 MP: 20 Durability: 700

Mana Conversion Rate D

Skills: None

[Ha, hahahaha...]

At this point, all I could do was laugh.

Ahh, so I was just a dull knife. I was just full of bluster from killing those demonic beasts.

Something like me is just an overly decorated sword that was all talk.

"What's wrong?"

[Ahh, Fran. I was completely wrong.]

"Un?"

I explained what I saw to Fran.

That if I didn't have skills, I would just be a crap sword, inferior to all the weapons around us.

I was almost certainly a sword created by some showoff noble who got tired of me.

Pat pat.

Fran stroked my blade.

[Fran...]

“Un.”

[Are you comforting something as useless as me?]

“Master has skills.”

What a nice young lady!

That was right. Even if I was a crap sword compared to the sold swords in terms of attack power, I could act as support with my skills.

That was the only worth I had.

I've decided! I'll become a skill master!

But I wanted to buy her a nice sword, not a dull one like me.

She didn't have a choice but to use me now, but I'll buy her a strong one later.

And to do that, we'll need to enter the guild and make tons of money!

[Great, sorry for worrying you. I'm okay now. Let's go to the Adventurer's Guild.]

“Un.”

Though we wasted time because of me, we were able to make it to the Adventurer's Guild.

[It's big.]

The building was big even compared to the other buildings around it.

It was an indication that there were lots of adventurers inside.

[Here we come!]

I gave a shout. Though nobody could hear it.

The inside was cleaner than I thought.

Though I was expecting a more rustic, pub-like interior.

It was kind of like the lobby of a classy hotel.

Well, it would do the guild's reputation harm if it was too much of a mess, so I supposed it made sense.

But a twelve-year-old girl entering alone attracted a lot of attention.

Many adventurers around us watched as Fran walked towards the counter.

"This is the Adventurer's Guild, so..."

"I know. I want to join."

"Ah, okay. Just you alone?"

"Un, just me."

It seemed that even in this world, a twelve-year-old girl joining a guild all by herself was a rare occurrence.

It would likely have been okay if the twelve-year-old girl had a proper sword and armor, and nonchalantly gave off the vibe that she had been hunting since she was young.

But Fran didn't even have any armor on.

Rather, her outfit was in a mess so she looked like a run-away slave.

She didn't fit into this place at all.

The female receptionist that Fran just talked to gave her an explanation.

"Every applicant must take a test before being accepted."

"Un."

"Will a full-contact fight be okay?"

"It's okay."

"Will it truly be okay? There are cases in which applicants have been injured."

"I don't care."

"The guild is not responsible for anything that happens."

"Okay."

"Is that, I see... Understood. Please wait a moment."

Having realized that Fran was taking the test, the adventurers began talking amongst themselves.

No one was going to try to stop us, but they weren't particularly welcoming, either.

It felt like they were looking down on Fran, thinking it inane that such a young child would want to become an adventure.

That should be obvious. If I were in their shoes, I would have thought the exact same thing.

[Fran you okay?]

"Un?"

[No, it's nothing.]

The receptionist came back after we waited for a bit.

“Pardon the wait. Please come this way.”

“Un.”

She led us to a room within the guild, a gymnasium with all four walls covered in bricks. It seemed to be the guild’s training grounds.

A strong looking man was standing in that training ground.

He was likely over two meters tall. In addition, he had on cumbersome black armor with spikes, so he looked just like some turn-of-the-century overlord. Standing at his side was a large combat axe, amplifying that feeling.

I could almost hear the menacing sound effects.

A normal kid would likely have burst into tears at just the sight of him.

Because even someone like me who was used to the threatening feeling inspired by demonic beasts was a little surprised.

“Are you the potential recruit?”

Uwah. He was incredibly intimidating despite just staring at us.

“Un.”

But Fran didn’t seem afraid at all. She was acting the same as usual.

Our young lady is amazing!

“I’m Dunadron, your examiner.”

That’s way too many “D”s. It was hard to pronounce.

“The test itself is simple. You just have to fight me. If you lose too easily, then you fail!”

“Okay.”

"I'll tell you this ahead of time, but it's hard for me to hold back. I'm going to go all out, so you'd better leave if you don't want to get hurt!"

The moment Dunadrond shouted that, a powerful pressure came over us.

Did he just use an Intimidation skill? Did that mean the fight already started?

[Great, let's give it a shot!]

"Un!"

We were currently in a battle with Dunadrond at the Adventurer Guild's training grounds.

He was overpoweringly menacing.

If I were in a human body, I might have bowed my head and begged for my life. Thank goodness I was a sword.

I wonder how his stats are.

Name: Dunadrond Age: 46 years old

Race: Oni

Job: Greater Warrior

Lv: 38

HP: 246 MP: 133 Strength: 198 Agility: 131

Skills: Intimidate 4, Transport 3, Recovery Speed Boost 5, Sense Danger 4, Instructing 4, Regeneration 5, Speed 6, Earth Magic 2, Throwing 4, Poison Resistance 7, Tree Chopping 3, Axe Techniques 6, Axe Wielding 7, Roar 3, Revival, Energy Manipulation, Harden Muscles, Automatic HP Regeneration, Strength Boost [small]

Equipment: Heavy Tempered Steel Axe, Great Black Tortoise's Full Body Armor, Tyrant's Mantle, Snake Hide Boots, Divine Bracelet

Uwaah! That's super strong! In terms of stats, he totally beat us.

This man, in terms of physical strength, surpassed the lesser wyverns.

And his skills, for the most part, were pretty high leveled. And the same for his weapon's rank.

Name: Twin Headed Steel Axe

Attack: 650 MP: 3 Durability: 650

Mana Conversion Rate E

It has an attack of 650? No freaking way! It doesn't scare me one bit, got it?!

He was even a cool race, an Oni.

It seemed like being an examiner wasn't just for show.

The other adventurers I'd seen didn't even come close to matching him.

Was he serious when he said he'd be coming at us without holding back? Isn't this just a beginner's test?

I was pretty sure a normal beginner would lose in a flash...

Whatever. We should do all we can. After all, even if we don't win, they said we just had to show them our ability.

[Fran, you ready?]

"Okay."

"Then let's go!"

In the next moment, Dunadron became a blur.

And Fran flew to the side in an instant.

Boom!

That massive man approached us faster than I could've imagined and he swung the axe down at us. That huge axe went through the training ground's floor, producing a cloud of dust.

"Hoo, so you dodged it!"

[That was close!]

I saw that his axe was stuck in the ground right next to us. Seeing as how big a hole he made in the ground, he was incredibly strong.

"Hyap!"

He lifted his axe again and struck down.

Boom!

The ground was once again ripped apart and reduced to gravel.

Her bangs fluttered backwards at the wind pressure.

Hey, old man, wasn't that attack just now dangerous? It'd leave a serious wound if it even grazed her.

This is ridiculous! Has anyone passed this test before?

[It's dangerous to only run away. I'm attacking!]

I wasn't only observing the situation. I needed to land a strong hit before one of his strong attacks connected.

I didn't have to worry about killing him. He wasn't only overwhelmingly strong, but he also had on Executive's Bracelets.

It was an item that absorbed the damage from a fatal attack once.

"Hah!"

“Hoo, you’re fast!”

It was blocked completely by his axe.

I had secretly cast support magic, increasing Fran’s strength and agility, but our opponent was still stronger.

But that wasn’t all.

While he was busy blocking Fran’s consecutive attacks, the earth beneath Dunadron’s feet rose up like tentacles and wrapped around his legs.

“Whoa! Silent casting?!”

Hmph, she surprised him. Well, it was because Fran didn’t give any sign that she was preparing a spell.

The truth is, I had secretly cast and activated the earth magic.

Dunadron, too busy holding off Fran, was unable to avoid the magic at his feet.

And seeing Dunadron try and retreat, Fran let loose a strong technique.

Though his feet were stuck, he was able to block Fran’s attack with only the free movement of his upper body.

But he won’t be able to block this. Just try.

“Tri-Explosion.”

“Uwhooooa!”

Level 10 fire magic engulfed Dunadron.

The three simultaneous explosions, coming at him from three directions, were not only difficult to block, but also obscured his vision. Of course, it seemed like Fran cast it, but I was the one who activated the spell.

In other words, while I was casting the spell, Fran was readying her sword technique.

“Huuuup. Dragon Fang!”

A Sword Techniques 7 stab. Additionally, boosted with Telekinesis.

Fran charged at Dunadrond as he was unable to keep his balance from her barrage.

He must have realized what technique Fran used.

Dunadrond opened his eyes wide in shock and made an astonished face.

“How can such a little girl...! How can she use magic and Sword Techniques consecutively?!”

Dunadrond, unable to move his body, couldn’t dodge Fran’s attack.

“It’s over.”

“Kwaaagh!”

I sliced through Dunadrond’s side and once again sent him flying.

Slam!

Though he was likely around two hundred kilograms, we sent him flying ten meters and halfway through the brick wall of the training grounds.

I had only ever used it on demonic beasts, so I got to find out how it worked on people.

But was that too much? He probably didn’t die.

“...Cough...”

Thank goodness he’s alive.

Dunadrond seemed to still be conscious despite coughing up a lot of blood.

Fran slowly walked towards him.

Was he trying to use recovery magic?

And as I was watching him to see what he was doing, Fran lifted me up to right in front of Dunadron's eyes.

"Did I pass?"

Yeah, Fran was keeping her cool.

I had completely forgotten that this was a test.

"...Kuha, ha. You pass."

"Okay."

Is he still able to move? How sturdy is this guy? I stabbed a hole through his side.

But he was oblivious of my surprise and laughed all of a sudden when he got out of the wall.

It seemed like he actually did go easy on us. If he had decided to go all out, then he would've disregarded our counterattack and swung down with his axe. Well, maybe this was normal because it was a test.

"Hahahahaha! This is the first time a beginner did so much damage to me!"

That guy was monstrously sturdy. Is there anyone who can kill him?

"Dunadron-san!"

The receptionist ran towards us, perhaps having heard the destruction.

"Please tell me you didn't go all out—. Huh?"

Ahh, I see. Did she think that he had went full out against a beginner?

Well, she probably didn't think that that sound was Fran sending the examiner flying.

“Huh? Huuuh?”

The attendant seemed genuinely surprised at seeing Dunadrond covered in blood.

After the test was over, Fran followed Dunadrond to the highest floor of the guild.

Waiting for us inside was a slim, handsome man with blond hair.

“Hahaha, I lost!”

“Dunadrond-kun, this is not the time to be laughing.”

I could tell that he was an elf by looking at his ears. He looked weak at first glance, but...

Name: Klimt Age: 136 years old

Race: Wood Elf

Job: Greater Elementalist

Lv: 67

HP: 180 MP: 616 Strength: 87 Agility: 158

Skills: Quick Casting 7, Appraisal 5, Bow Wielding 3, Harvest 5, Tree Magic 7, Spirit Magic 8, Nature Magic 6, Synthesis 5, Earth Magic 10, Poison Resistance 3, Paralysis Resistance 4, Water Magic 5, Herblore 7, Cooking 4, Mana Manipulation, Child of the Forest

Unique Skill: Spirits' Blessing

Titles: Guild Master, Guardian of Alessa, Tree Arts User, Earth Arts User

Equipment: Cane of the Ancient God's Cherry Tree, Clothes of the Clone Snake's Scales, Vest of the Wind Dragon, Shoes of the Moon Rabbit, Divine Bracelet

He surpassed Dunadrond in ability. After all, magic skills are super dangerous.

And spirit magic seemed incredibly rare. Just what I'd expect from a Guild Master.

“For the time being, please tell me your name.”

“Fran.”

“And your age?”

“Twelve.”

Dunadrond groaned after what Fran said.

“What? You’re seriously as old as you look?!”

Ahh, I get it.

He must have thought that since Fran was so skilled, she was an extremely old member of a long lived race. Because otherwise, there was no way someone who looked so young could be so strong.

“Dunadrond-kun.”

“Ah, my apologies.”

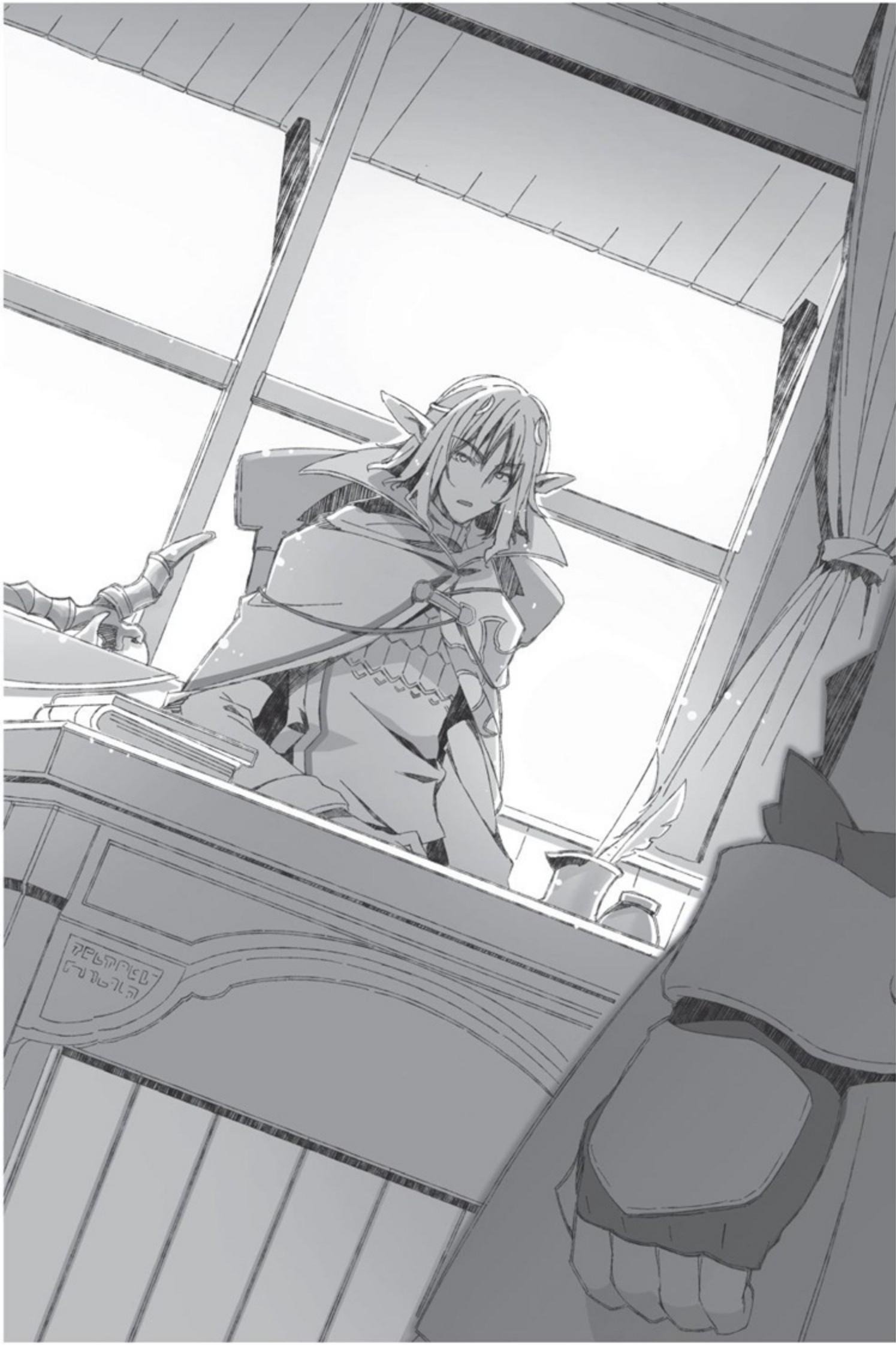
At the Guild Master’s reprimand, Dunadrond lowered his head. That wasn’t cute at all.

But his behavior before the test was completely different from now.

Before, he looked like a hulking berserker, but now I couldn’t see him as anything but a good-natured man.

“But I can also understand my friend’s emotions. To think that a child no more than twelve years of age used a middle-class Sword Technique and cast level 10 fire magic without an incantation? It is unbelievable.”

A crease formed in the middle of the Guild Master’s forehead. It was as if he was analyzing Fran from top to bottom.



"And on top of that, she has the Appraisal Block skill?"

Come to think of it, he had Appraisal.

He must have tried to see if Fran was lying by using it.

But I had Appraisal Block.

It was a skill I acquired by using Self-Evolution points for just such an occasion.

One of the good points of this skill was that its effects even reached Fran, who had me equipped.

Though that also meant she was likely arousing a lot of suspicion.

"So where did a twelve year old girl like you come from?"

"It's a secret."

"...Do you believe that I can accept that answer?"

"I won't say."

"...Sigh. How bothersome."

Hmm, I'm starting to get worried.

I should tell Fran to ask the all-important question.

"Did I pass? Or fail?"

"We couldn't fail someone with enough skill to fight against Dunadrond."

"Then give me a guild card."

"I am aware. I will prepare it now. Please fill out the information on these documents. If you do not know how to write, someone can write for you."

"It's fine."

Fran's parents gave her a good education, and she was taught how to read and write to increase her value as a slave.

"We're more than happy to have such a skilled adventurer! Isn't that right, Guild Master?"

"Yees, of course. And the spirits have been quiet."

"Spirits?"

"No matter how hard you look, they are only visible to Elementalists."

"What do the spirits tell you?"

"Spirits are sensitive to emotions. They can sense any wicked or evil thoughts."

Spirits are convenient. I really want to use them too.

The issue was if there were any demonic beasts that use spirit magic.

"Do demonic beasts use spirit magic?"

"Though it is rare, some demonic beasts do use them as some spirits feed off malevolent emotions. Unfortunately."

Hoo. That was good news. It'd be worthwhile to find one.

"Guild Master, the preparations are complete."

"Is that so. Then let us go."

The Guild Master lead us to a small room next to the counter.

Inside the room was something that looked like an altar, and on that altar was a crystal ball.

"Please put your hand here. This will be over shortly."

“Un.”

As the Guild Master said, it was over in a moment.

It seemed like it registered Fran’s mana.

Next to us, the receptionist was touching another crystal ball.

It looked like the card would be finished after it touched the ball.

“All that is left is picking your Job.”

“Job?”

“Yes. Because everyone has different talents, there are many Jobs that confer a variety of benefits.”

Come to think of it, Randel was a merchant. Dunadron was a Greater Warrior, and the Guild Master was a Greater Elementalist. The single word “Greater” made them seem strangely stronger.

“The Jobs Fran-sama can pick are...huh?”

“What is wrong? Nel-kun.”

“Nothing, it’s just that there are many compatible Jobs.”

“Hmm?”

We looked at the screen as well from behind the Guild Master.”

Warrior, Swordsman, Brawler, Spellsword, Magician, Dual Swordsman, Flame Arts User, White Mage, Summoner, Beast Tamer, Thief, Alchemist, Dismantler, Cook.

There were a lot.

It looked like the Jobs were affected by the Set Skills, or in other words, the skills Fran was using.

I also had Spear Wielding and Spear Techniques but didn't have them set.

So Cook and Dismantler are also jobs.

"This is..."

Even the Guild Master was at a loss.

Could this actually be an awkward situation?

"Wheew, that was quite surprising. Though I did expect one who fought against Dunadrond-kun to be able to be a Swordsman or a Magician, but this is unexpected."

Oh, it looked like everything was okay.

He must have gotten used to surprises like this.

"Then what will you choose?"

[Ask them to recommend something.]

"What's good?"

"I see. My advice is that Spellsword, Dual Swordsman, and Flame Arts User are middle-grade Jobs and thus rare. Their benefits are strong as well. Spellswords use both magic and a sword; Dual Swordsmen emphasize swords above all else; and Flame Arts Users emphasize magic."

I see. What should we pick...

[What looks good to you, Fran?]

'Spellsword looks cool.'

[Then let's choose Spellsword.]

The truth is, Spellsword's effects were extremely useful.

Spellsword: Middle-grade Job. Unlocked after achieving level 6 in a sword skill and a magic skill.

Effects: Strength and MP increase easily upon level up. In addition, increases the proficiency of obtaining sword skills and magic skills. Also increases the power of sword skills and magic skills.

But there was something I had to ask.

“Can I change my Job?”

“Yes. You can change your Job whenever as long as you come to the guild. However, because you receive the effects based on the Job you have set, should you choose to switch from Spellsword to Dual Swordsman, there will be a slight change in your status. This is especially true when switching from a high-rank Job to a low-rank one. And you won’t be able to use Job-specific skills.”

Well, that was all what I expected so I didn’t mind.

We should go with Spellsword since we can change it later.

“I’ll choose Spellsword.”

“Then now your guild card is complete.”

It looked like a normal bronze-colored card.

Written on it were Fran’s name, the name of the guild, her Job, and her rank: G.

“The guild card also acts as identification and a replacement costs 5000 gil. Because it is registered to your mana, only you can use it. But please do take care not to lose it.”

After that, the Guild Master explained the uses of the guild and also gave us some precautions.

Normally the receptionist would do this, but it seemed like we were receiving a lot of special attention.

The Guild Master took care of everything.

Including cleaning up afterwards.

Adventurers can only accept guild requests that correspond with their adventurer rank. Specifically, adventurers can accept requests that are one rank above or below their own.

After completing a certain number of requests, we can take a rank up test.

The colors of the cards went ranks G and F were bronze; ranks E and D were black; ranks C and B were silver, rank A was gold, and rank S was platinum white.

All the cards were made of the same material.

There were no annual fees, but if we don't take a request that corresponds with our rank within a set period of time, then our rank can go down or we can even be expelled.

And we should take care to not take any actions that betrayed the Adventurer's Guild. In the worst case, we could even be purged.

And we should also be careful because the guild doesn't get involved in disputes between adventurers.

That final piece of advice was probably directed at Fran specifically. Well, she did seem like the type to get into fights.

"And with that, you are now an adventurer."

"Un."

"Is there anything else you would like to ask?"

What I had to ask was more a wish than a question.

"Are you going to announce what happened during the test?"

"No. Because it is related to the abilities of the adventurers, we do not give any

information on it.”

“Then that’s fine.”

“Do you not want to attract attention to yourself?”

“Not the bad kind.”

“Then let us make a promise. Dunadrond-kun, the one who oversaw your application, Nel-kun, and I will not speak of the results of your match. Well, that is actually helpful to us as well. Such as he is, Dunadrond-kun is gathering adventurers at the emergency front-line. We would rather others not look down upon him.”

“I can’t tell you what to do. But, little lady, if you’re willing to keep it a secret, we will too.”

“However, I believe that you will receive attention from your ability alone...”

Hmm. I didn’t have any complaints.

Well, I guess this was a good conversation?

After we received the guild card, Nel-san called us over to the reception desk.

“Will you be taking a request right away?”

After she said that, I remembered that we wouldn’t be able to even find a place to stay at if we didn’t sell the loot.

There were so many things going on while getting a guild card that I had forgotten.

“I have a few goblin horns.”

“Ahh, in that case, we take those at the request counter. Please come this way.”

Nel-san was speaking politely to Fran now that she was an adventurer.

She was definitely the face of the Adventurer’s Guild. She was well educated.

“I also have demonic beast loot I want to sell.”

“Then please wait at the loot purchasing counter. First, I will calculate the cost of the goblin horns.”

“Un.”

“Twelve sets is 160 gil. Please check to make sure this is correct.”

The truth was that this still wasn’t enough for a night at an inn. Even the cheapest inn was 300 gil. Plus, if possible, I wanted to stay at a nicer place.

We moved to the loot purchasing counter.

“Have you finished dismantling your loot? If the loot is too big or if it hasn’t been dismantled yet, please put in the space next to the counter. We can use a different room if the loot is even bigger than that.”

Nel-san explained.

What should I do? Based on the price of goblin horns and the Black Bug I sold to Randel, low-ranked demonic beasts were all cheap.

In that case, maybe I should sell medium-ranked demonic beast loot and higher.

There were some big ones among them.

“It’s a little big.”

“Then please put them on the purchasing space over there. But did you leave it at an inn? It is a good idea to keep careful watch over expensive loot.”

Ahh, at a glance, it must look like Fran didn’t have anything. Was that it?

But since I used Appraisal and saw lots of people with item pockets on their hips, there was no way dimensional storage was a legendary ability. It should be okay to take the loot out here.

“I’ll take it out now.”

Though I was the one taking it out. This was one of the shortcomings of skill sharing. Fran could use the Dimensional Storage skill, but that only applied to items that she stored herself. Since our sharing didn’t extend to the items I stored, Fran wasn’t able to reach the items that I put in storage.

Fran acted like she was taking out the loot as I put it on the purchasing space.

I started with all of the low-rank loot.

I took out the spoils of Fran’s all-important first kill, the Twin Head Bear’s hide and claws. Its internal organs could probably also be used to make medicine, but I just kind of stuffed them into storage without packaging them. So if I took them out, there’d probably be a lot of trouble for everyone involved. I decided to give up on that for today. And I also took out two Poison Fang Rats’ hides and fangs.

“How did you procure these items?”

“Killed them on the way here.”

“Did you also dismantle them yourself?”

“Un.”

The adventurers that were watching us began talking amongst each other.

It seemed like they were laughing at us.

Hmm, was it because I only took out low-rank loot?

Then next I should take out something better.

The loot that I got in Areas 2 and 3 of the plain.

The poisonous wings and skeleton of the Giant Bat.

The tusks, hide, and skull of the Crash Boar.

The shell and horns of the Rock Bison.

They weren't particularly strong monsters, but this should be enough for a few nights at an inn and to buy cheap armor.

The loot from the Tyrant Saber Toothing Tiger or the Dopplesnake would probably be enough to meet that goal, but I held off on that.

Because we might be able to use them to make Fran a weapon, and doing so would probably attract too much attention.

After all, the Guild Master's Clothes of the Clone Snake were made from a Dopplesnake, and Dunadron's Tyrant's Mantle was made from a Tyrant Saber Toothing Tiger.

In other words, the loot from those monsters was at the level of being used as equipment by elite adventurers.

If I sold that loot here, all hell would break loose.

For some reason, Nel-san looked concerned.

Were these demonic beasts too strong for Fran to sell? Because low-ranked adventurers may be able to beat them, but they were still high ranked enough to eat children.

But because low-ranked demonic beasts' loot wouldn't make enough money, I needed to sell the higher-ranked loot. Attracting attention just once would be best.

Then maybe I should sell all of the middle-rank and low-rank demonic beast loot?

[So, what do you think?]

'Doing this all now is probably best.'

[I know, right?! Then let's take some other stuff out.]

I also took out a bundle of spider webs, venomous fangs, and carapace of the Stone Spider. The claws and hide of the Digger Mole. And the hide and claws of the Paralysis Claw Cat.

I didn't sell the meat so I could use them for Fran's meals.

"This is everything."

"...Wow. U-Understood. I will Appraise these now, so please wait a moment."

Nel-san could even Appraise the loot. She had a variety of abilities.

She called over some other receptionists and the three of them checked the loot.

They finished Appraising it after ten minutes.

"Our apologies for the wait."

"Un."

"All together, we will purchase these for 195,000 gil. Will that be okay?"

What? 195,000? For real?! No, isn't that too much? I would've been grateful for just 3,000 gil.

"Are you setting the price high?"

"I am not; it is an entirely reasonable price. The price is elevated because there were a few Threat Level F demonic beast loot mixed in, and the loot was in excellent condition."

I didn't pay attention to the condition of the loot at all.

But that made sense. A severely damaged hide couldn't possibly be worth as much as a hide in perfect condition.

"As an example, the Twin Head Bear's hide is normally worth 6,000 gil. However, the hide that Fran-sama brought has no flaws, and you perfectly dismantled the entire thing. Thus, the price became 18,000 gil."

It was tripled. Holy hell. If that was true for the other loot too, then I can actually believe it?

Well, I'll take whatever is offered.

"Here is your payment. Please ensure everything is in order."

"Un."

Fran put it in Dimensional Storage immediately.

Not only would it be terrible if she dropped it, but this was also the best way to stop pickpockets.

"I'll be going."

And when Fran turned her back to the counter, this happened.

"Wait right there, you brat!"

One adventurer blocked Fran's way as she was walking out of guild with her payment.

"Un."

"P-Pipsqueak, wait!"

Fran ignored the man and tried to walk around him.

He probably never thought he'd get totally ignored after he tried so noisily to stop her. He appeared a little flustered as he once again blocked Fran's way.

"Un."

"I told you to wait! Are you even listening?!"

"You're a bother."

"Enough, now stop!"

Impressive. This was like something out of a cartoon.

But he blocked the entrance.

[Fran. It looks like we don't have a choice. Let's hear what he has to say.]

"Un? Okay."

"So you heard me."

He misunderstood Fran's reply and he grinned.

He looked just like a mob character.

The most conspicuous part of his design was the spiked armor on his shoulder that looked close to stabbing himself. He had on dark, leather armor that I never wanted to get a whiff of. On his back was a chipped battle axe. All he looked like was a brawny baldy cosplaying as a bandit.

And his four comrades that showed up one after the other were dressed similarly.

This many of them felt repetitive.

"Hey!"

"What could be the problem?"

The mob character yelled towards the front desk, and Nel-san shouted back in kind.

"Don't play favorites!"

"Excuse me? Favorites?"

"Yeah! When we sold a Twin Head Bear, you didn't even give us 2,000 gil!"

Nel-san sighed deeply after hearing that.

"Ahh, I remember. You were the party that brought a hide torn ragged with holes, half its head pulverized, and all without even dismantling it?"

"How dare you speak to me like that! It was a Twin Head Bear just like hers!"

“That is untrue. All the loot your party brought received the lowest estimate possible.”

“What was that? Estimate?”

“Either way, this is why I hate you scummy mercenaries with muscles for brains. When you climb up the ranks just because you’re strong for a beginner, all while not knowing a single custom of being an adventurer. I wish people like you would just die.”

Whooa. Nel-san, you may have been speaking quietly, but I heard everything.

We should do our best not to piss off Nel-san in the future. Even as a sword, I got the shivers when I imagined her saying that she wished for someone to die with a smile on her face.

“You all finished the Twin Head Bear off by surrounding it and stabbing it repeatedly, correct?”

“Yeah. We lured it with bait and the five of us attacked it together. We were told that Threat Level F demonic beasts were hard for beginners to beat, but it was easy. All those other adventurers that struggled are cowards.”

Ah, I finally got it. He misunderstood what the other adventurers meant by it being hard to beat a demonic beast.

It was the difference between being able to beat a demonic beast easily and being able to beat it cleanly.

And those mob characters simple-mindedly thought that just killing it would make them money.

This wasn’t for an OP skill cheater like me to say, but don’t underestimate Dismantle!

It’s difficult to skin the demonic beasts well!

And it was extremely labor intensive. Fran had to work super hard to dismantle them.

Nel-san and the others must hate it when adventurers bring in loot without dismantling it.

"If it is okay with you, I shall explain. I am first talking about hides, but if they are in such shoddy shape, then they cannot be used for equipment. At most, they could be used as materials for low-ranked armor. The head could be stuffed but you lacked even that, and the rest of the hide was damaged. It received the lowest price possible because it even lost its claws. Its internal organs that could be used for medicine but those too were damaged and thus unusable. It must have taken you all quite some time just to kill it. Even its meat was spoiled so it could not be used as food. In other words, the majority of what you brought was the equivalent of trash. Is it not unsurprising to find that such inferior trash did not receive a high price? Ahh, and also, you had it dismantled here rather than dismantling it yourselves, correct? The dismantling fee and the fee for the disposal of its rotting organs were all deducted from the price. It was likely a total of 600 gil, correct? That price was actually too high."

The mob characters couldn't say a word during Nel-san's lecture. They were simply dumbfounded at Nel-san's rapid-fire explanation.

I was convinced by what she said.

But they didn't look convinced at all. No, it was more like they couldn't understand it. Well, they didn't seem like the type to back down just because they understood.

"Quit yapping! I bet you were trying to talk your way out of this, but it won't work! Pay us back for that unfair price you gave us!"

"Yeah! Yeah!"

This looked bad.

He was the typical type who ignored the reasonable arguments of others and only listen to himself. He'd probably keep making a racket until people went along with what he said.

I didn't like them to begin with, but I was starting to get angry at them.

"The price was reasonable."

"Like hell! It was totally unfair!"

"Sigh. How about you improve your hunting skills before bringing complaints to us? Unlike mercenaries, adventurers must become proficient in much more than simply fighting enemies. My belief is that being adventurers is impossible for you lot."

"Haaah? Adventurers are just cowards who can't even go into the battlefield! If they can do it, then how can we not!"

We likely weren't the only ones were getting angry. The nearby adventurers were glaring at them. Because he was also talking smack about the adventurers.

And there was no way an attractive receptionist like Nel-san wasn't popular. It was natural for the adventurers to get furious as he continued to act aggressively towards Nel-san.

Isn't he about to die?

He wasn't even on par with the adventurers in the lobby.

Name: Dem Age: 27 years old

Race: Beastfolk. Red Dog

Job: Warrior

Status: Enraged

Lv: 13

HP: 48 MP: 20 Strength: 33 Agility: 23

Skills: Transport 1, Sword Wielding 1, Theft 2, Threaten 1, Axe Wielding 2

Titles: Deserter from the Battlefield

Equipment: Scrap Iron Battle Axe, Scrap Iron Breastplate, Torn Deer Hide Armor, Bracelet of Strength [Fake]

He was a weakling. Even though he was only this strong, he was the strongest of the people trying to start a fight. I could've beat him in five seconds.

I was thinking about what to do when the mob pointed their spears towards us.

Those idiots must have realized that Nel-san wasn't going to give them anything, regardless of what they said.

"It's weird for such a tiny puke to have so much demonic beast loot in the first place!"

"And why does that matter?"

"She must've gotten those illegally!"

"Again, why does that matter? Even if she did acquire the loot through illegal means, doesn't that fact have nothing to do with you?"

"...Yes, it does! It does! She took our fair share of money from us!"

Wow. Now I had no idea what he was saying. How did he end up with that idea? There's a crazy man here!

But he definitely wasn't going to convince Nel-san.

"She possesses the strength and skill to obtain this loot. At the very least, enough skill to cleanly kill a Twin Headed Bear and skin it perfectly."

"Hmph! As if I can believe that! You, you're a Black Cat, aren't you?"

"Un."

"You Black Cats are famous for your uselessness even amongst beastfolk. There's no way a brat from a race of weaklings could have killed that demonic beast! Something's clearly wrong here!"

"That's right, that's right."

"You shitty brat. I'll overlook this this one time if you pay compensation. Give me the money you just got."

"Hehehe. The guild doesn't interfere in fights between adventurers, right? So no help's coming?"

"Well..."

Nel-san froze at such carefully crafted words.

That seemed right.

The guild doesn't interfere in disputes between adventurers.

But that didn't mean the guild turned a blind eye to everything. The guild would probably ignore a small scuffle, but crimes were an entirely different matter. That much was obvious.

Nel-san said before that they only have muscles for brains, but that's insulting to muscles. They weren't at the level to be called idiots. Wasn't it more like they had slime stuffed in their heads?

"Hey, what're those eyes for?"

"....."

Fran looked up at the men.

Fran, who normally had no expression on her face. But now, she was looking up at them with eyes that were clearly full of rage.

"Is a weakling Black Cat like you disobeying a Red Wolf?"

"That's right, that's right. Don't be so arrogant, you piece of crap cat race!"

"Your clan is a shame upon the beastfolk! Give us all your money and we'll forgive you."

They were giving the worst insult possible.

If Fran, who was even angrier than me, weren't here, I would have attacked them already.

Snap.

I heard Fran's anger reach the boiling point.

Fran's goal, the one inherited from her parents, was to improve the status of the Black Cats. She couldn't hold back after hearing their insults.

"Shut up."

"What'd you say?"

"Stop your barking. You Red Dog."

You said it! You said it, Fran-san! Excellent job! I'll give you something tasty later.

"This bitch! I'll kill you!"

Hearing such cliched lines was becoming boring.

"You won't be able to, you weakling!"

"Are you calling me a weakling?"

"The weaklings are you Black Cats!"

"I'll ignore this if you disappear in five seconds. Or spin in a circle a thousand times and bark. You mutt."

"How dare you! After I'm done raping you, I'm gonna sell you to a slave trader! You're dead!"



Intimidation, statutory rape, human trafficking.

Their lives were over. A guard will probably come here right away and arrest them. Because a few adventurers already went outside of the guild.

Well, we'll be done before that, though.

"Your breath stinks. Quit yapping."

"You little shit!"

He took out his battle axe and pointed it towards Fran. His friends also had out their swords and spears, and they were shouting in an attempt to intimidate us.

You took out your weapons, right? Yes, now it's self-defense!

"I'll kill you!"

Not going to happen. It's not like you'll be able to move, anyway.

"Huh? U, wa, aaaaaghhhh! My feet! Heeeeek!"

He wasn't able to stay standing and fell to the side. Everything below his knees was gone.

Fran didn't even take out the sword. She used Aura Blade, a level 6 Sword Technique.

It was a technique that shot out a blade made of mana. Its attack power was weak, but it was possible to make it invisible in the direction that it would fly, and it could also be used in combination with Telekinesis; it could be called the perfect move for sneak attacks or assassinations.

And for Fran to already use it so well! Fran, you're a scary child!

The man was wriggling around like a bug in the puddle made from his own blood.

"Aaggh, aaaagggghh."

I think I might throw up! That was super gross.

"Did that brat ju...guwahhh?"

"Heek... It hurts!"

Two more hit the ground as their legs were cut off by Fran's telekinetic missiles. Another missile went flying at one of their faces. It didn't have much power, but it shattered his nose and broke all of his front teeth. He might even have lost his eyes.

The remaining two must not have grasped the situation. They were glaring at Fran while readying themselves to run away.

But they must still not have stopped viewing Fran as a kid because they didn't run away.

[They're slow to realize that they've already dug their own graves.]

I didn't necessarily want Fran to kill them though. Because cleaning up afterwards would be a pain.

Fran lunged forward. The very next moment, she was standing right in front of them.

She swung me while I was still wrapped in cloth, hitting one of them across the face, alternating sides.

Bam! Bam!

She started hitting them with the flat of the blade.

No, was it better to say she was hitting them with the belly of the blade because it was my middle area? Well, both his legs and his face ended up pulverized. Low level magic or a potion should be enough to heal him back to full health.

The last remaining person turned around, but Fran used a close combat kicking technique and shot out an Aura Kick with Vibration Pierce mixed in.

He tried to run away, but it was too late. His knee was shattered and his muscles were probably torn to shreds inside his body. And after Fran hit his knee, she ended it with a Vibration Pierce enhanced elbow to his lowered head.

Silence.

All noises from the adventurers disappeared and the only sounds to be heard in the guild were the raucous cries for help of the mob.

“Excuse me.”

“Y-Yes!”

“May I go?”

“Ah...yes. Thank you very much for coming here. We await your next visit.”

Whooa, Nel-san was smiling happily. This must have been a welcome sight. She gave us a thumbs up and told us, “Good job.”

“Well then, I will be handing you all over to the guards as you are now.”

“Aghh, get that shitty brat, too! Sh-She suddenly attacked us!”

“Huuuh? Please reserve such nonsensical speech for your sleep, you trash. That child clearly acted in self-defense. Isn’t that right?”

“Uh, yeah. That’s right, that’s right!”

“Definitely self-defense.”

All done. It was a relief to find out that Nel-san and the adventurers would testify for us.

“It hurts! It hurts so much! Heal me!”

“Before that, I will take a cleaning bill for the floor you dirtied. Cleaning blood is difficult, after all. Yes, I’ll give you a big discount and put it as 1000 gil. If you give me that much, I may even have you healed.”

She didn’t say for certain that she’d heal him! Nel-san was savage.

We left the guild as we heard Nel-san's cold-hearted comments.

That aside, this really took a long time. The sun was already starting to set.

[How about we find an inn? After all, sleeping outside sounds pretty bad when we're all the way in the city.]

"Un."

One hour after we left the guild. We were walking along the street.

[I never imagined we'd be refused a room.]

"Un."

[So even if you have a guild card, they can't give lodgings to a kid.]

Though the landlady said this while refusing us a room, she was also clearly bothered by Fran's clothing.

With clothes made from ragged cloth and sandals on her feet, Fran looked like a homeless person or a runaway slave.

She must look like nothing but trouble.

Though smell might not be an issue since she cleaned herself with Purification magic.

[First, let's buy you some new equipment and clothes.]

"?"

So she didn't know. I'll take care of everything, so you can just relax.

We headed to the plaza right across from the Adventurer's Guild.

Because I heard that there was a row of shops meant for adventurers there.

A weapons forge, shields forge, repairs forge, pharmacy, alchemy shop, bar, restaurants,

and lots more.

This also helped me learn prices.

A steel knife cost 2000 gil, a rank 5 HP potion was 10000 gil, a rank 4 antidote was 2000 gil.

Rank 5 was the worst potion possible, but the prices were incredibly high. Well, we were told that it can instantly heal serious wounds. If a medicine like that existed on Earth, then it would probably have been more expensive, so I didn't think it was too bad.

I had no idea what any of the goods on display were, and this strangely made my heart race.

[This is fun.]

“Un.”

[Oh! Fran, you think so, too?]

[There're lots of new items. It's amazing.]

[Yeah, I agree.]

I could tell that there was a sparkle in Fran's eyes. It didn't really show on her face, but Fran was clearly having a blast.

But where's the shop I'm looking for?

The truth is, I heard some juicy information on the street.

That a famous blacksmith was staying in Alessa.

Apparently, he was renting and running a forge.

I wanted that blacksmith to make Fran her armor. We might not have enough money, but asking should be free.

[But where could it be?]

I saw some forges and armor shops, but they didn't give an amazing impression.

Shouldn't I be able to tell where such an amazing blacksmith is because there'd be tons of people there?

[Could the smithy already be closed?]

If it was overly popular, then that could happen too.

"The young lady over there. Would you like to take a look?"

"Huh?"

"That's right, I'm talking to you."

I was on guard as I thought, "No way, is some guy hitting on Fran!" but the person who spoke to Fran was an elderly dwarf man.

But he might actually be a lecherous old pervert so I wasn't able to relax just yet.

If he does anything weird, I'll act like I was falling and stab him through the foot.

"If you're looking for armor, why not take a look?"

"How'd you know?"

"When you're my age, you can tell just by looking."

"....."

"No need to be so on guard. The reason is simple. Your footsteps showed you have immense skill. But you dressed in dirty clothes. And you looked at the forges and armor shops several times. Thus, you are looking for armor, correct?"

This old man isn't just some ordinary person! Who in the world is he?

Name: Garth Age: 82 years old

Race: Dwarf

Job: Arcane Blacksmith

Lv: 33

HP: 160 MP: 173 Strength: 122 Agility: 46

Skills: Dismantle 2, Flame Resistance 7, Smithing 10, Smithing Magic 9, Appraisal 7, Mining 3, Sewing 5, Hammer Techniques 2, Hammer Wielding 7, Poison Resistance 2, Leather Crafting 6, Fire Magic 6, Working Nonstop 6, Arcane Smithing 7, Identify 8, Fire God's Blessing, Energy Manipulation

Extra Skill: Ingenuity

Titles: The Wandering Blacksmith, Honored Blacksmith of the Cranel Kingdom, Master Blacksmith

Equipment: Magic-Steel Blacksmith's Hammer, Clothes of the Salamander's Leather, Phoenix Emblem Sandals, Bracelet of Stamina Regen

His skills, stats, and titles were all impressive. Could this old man be the rumored famous blacksmith?

That would also explain why he had such a keen sense of observation.

Well, it was fine. He approached us. I'll just think of this as a lucky break.

“Impressive.”

Wahahaha, I've lived for a long time. In any case, would you like to check out my shop?”

“I'd really like to.”

“Then come this way.”

Garth led us to a shop located in the corner of the plaza.

During that time, lots of people looked at us.

They were staring at us intensely, as if evaluating us.

[Huh? For some reason, everyone's looking at us.]

"Bad guys?"

[No, they aren't that, but...]

The really noticeable stares were coming from the male merchants.

They were keeping such sharp watch over us that Fran even mistook them for enemies.

Why in the world was this happening?

"Ahh, pay them no mind. Those merchants are all impatient to sell their weapons. They even follow the people who come out of my shop, trying to force them to buy their goods."

Geez, that sounded like a pain.

"I'll let you out through the backdoor when you leave so you can relax. More importantly, what kinds of things were you looking for?"

I wasn't relaxed at all, but at the moment, all I could do was think about an answer.

But first, I needed to make most of our good luck at meeting such a skilled blacksmith.

"You'll sell stuff to me?"

"I only sell my weapons to adventurers who'll use them. You passed."

The old man said he sold his weapons super cheaply to adventurers.

It seemed he traveled across the country doing just that.

He was a picky master craftsman. But I didn't hate that.

[Let's ask him to show us his swords first.]

“Show me your swords first.”

“What? But you have a wonderful sword on your back. After all, this is my first time seeing an Intelligence Weapon.”

No way! How'd he find out?

Appraisal? No, I have Appraisal Block. There's no way he could've found out.

“...Intelligence Weapon?”

Fran tilted her head to the side and repeated his words.

Excellent acting! Keep dodging the question!

“Ahh, no. I'm not trying to trick you or anything. I just wanted to make sure. My eyes are a bit special, so I can see just a bit even if something has Appraisal Block. Especially when it comes to weapons.”

So an ability like that existed! Come to think of it, he also had the skills Identify and Ingenuity. Did he find out because of those skills' effects?

“Well, all I know is your sword's attack power, that its Mana Conversion is rank A, and that it's an Intelligence Weapon. How's that, Sword?”

[Then you should understand, shouldn't you? That I want this young lady—Fran—to use a proper sword.]

“Huuu? Is this Telepathy? You really do have your own mind! Amazing, truly amazing!”

[You're acting like a kid.]

“Master is like that sometimes, too.”

[What? You're kidding, right?]

“I'm serious.”

[Ah, well. Anyone would act like a kid if something he liked was right in front of him.]

“Un.”

I looked at the old man, Garth, who was chattering animatedly.

“Uwa, it really has its own Intelligence!”

[You mean I’m just like him?]

I should control myself in the future.

“Oh dear, I’m sorry. I was overexcited. But after looking at your status, I don’t think you’ll be needing one of my swords.”

[No, no. You saw my status, right? All of your swords are stronger than me. Or at least, the ones over there.]

Without a doubt, the high-quality steel weapons came from this blacksmith.

Inside his shop were identical weapons all over the place.

They were either my equals or stronger than me.

I couldn’t help but reply bitterly when I saw weapons like those.

Could it be that I could only find my true self after realizing that my stats were abysmally low?

“Solely in terms of attack power, that’s true. Ahh, was that it? Do you not know a lot about Mana Conversion Ranks?”

[Mana Conversion Rank? I recall seeing a line about that.]

“So you don’t know. What a shame.”

[Is it important?]

“Not just important! When it comes to evaluating swords, it’s an essential figure!”

No way! I had no idea.

“What a surprise.”

[Explain more in detail.]

“Of course. The Mana Conversion Rank determines how much of an effect loading mana into the weapon will have. It isn’t an exaggeration to say that a weapon’s performance can vary drastically based on it.”

[So that’s what it is.]

“For example, take this sword.”

Garth took down a dagger that was hanging on his wall and held it in his hand. It was made out of steel and had a Mana Conversion Rank E.

“A weapon with Mana Conversion Rank E has a transfer efficiency of five percent. As an example, if you put 100 MP into it, its attack power will increase by 5.”

Garth continued to explain.

The next thing Garth took out was a mythril dagger.

It had Mana Conversion Rank C-. He said it had seventy percent efficiency. Meaning if 100 mana was put into it, its attack power would increase by 70.

This was definitely important. A weaker sword could match a stronger one with that.

“The better the conversion rate, the better the efficiency, and the longer the increase can stay in place. In other words, its effect lasts longer.”

[As a reference, is mythril’s conversion rate of C- high?]

“Of course. Mythril is particularly efficient. It isn’t an exaggeration to say that there’re no weapons with a rank higher than C- on the market. And even so, for the sake of increasing a weapon’s conversion rate, its base attack power is low. Most of them are useless.”

“Then a rate of A is amazing.”

“Yeah. A weapon with a rate of A is a full on magic sword. A transfer efficiency of two hundred percent. The truth is, my weapon can’t even compare.”

Transfer efficiency of two hundred percent. Does that mean if I put in 100 MP, my attack power would increase by 200?

That’s super strong! Could my time finally be coming?

[Is there a limit to how much mana I can load?]

“It varies depending on the material. You’re made of...I can’t really tell. It looks like a mixture of magical steel with a halmolium base, but...”

Fran handed me to Garth and he checked while tapping on my blade.

“You should be able to handle more than orichalcum, so 1000 shouldn’t be a problem. Well, there’s no way someone could have so much mana, though. Anyway, even the magicians of the royal court just barely have 500 MP!”

As he laughed heartily, a serious realization hit me.

I can store 1000. Meaning I can increase my attack power by 2000?

Though I thought this was strange considering I was one-shutting enemies already.

I thought that it was because I hit an enemy’s vitals or because I was flying super fast thanks to Telekinesis, but...

Most likely, I was already unconsciously loading mana into my blade.

“How long will the effect last?”

Well, once again, it depends on the material, but for Mana Conversion Rank E, it lasts five minutes. It goes up by two minutes after every increase in rank.”

[Then rank A lasts...]

“About thirty minutes.”

“That’s a super long time.”

[Then I’m not a useless sword?]

“If you’re useless, then nearly every sword in the world is useless as well.”

[I see, so that’s it... Uwaaa! Thank Christ!]

I was really glad to hear that. Happy enough that I’d be crying if I had eyes.

So both my body and my mind have turned into a sword. I never imagined that I’d be happy at being stronger than other swords. Well, this wasn’t a bad feeling.

“You’re the cream of the crop even among magic swords. You might even be on the level of a divine sword.”

“Magic swords? Divine swords?”

“Yeah. Did a god-rank blacksmith make you?”

[No, I really have no idea. I can’t remember anything about that.]

“I see...”

[Is there anything you know? If so, please tell me.]

Not knowing where I came from didn’t sit right with me.

If I could find out, I would.

“There’re ranks for blacksmiths as well. We’re divided into Blacksmiths, Greater Blacksmiths, Arcane Blacksmiths, and God-rank Blacksmiths. The Job also branches off into other ones, so this isn’t all of them. As it says in the name, God-rank Blacksmiths are the pinnacle of all blacksmiths. In the past, there were five such unidentified legendary blacksmiths.”

“Five legendary blacksmiths. So cool.”

“We blacksmiths admire them greatly. Only God-rank Blacksmiths would be able to make a divine sword.”

[And you’re saying a God-rank Blacksmith made me?]

“That’s what I think, but maybe not... You’re too weak to be called a divine sword. But you’re also too strong to be a magic sword. You’re smack dab in the middle.”

[What’s up with that. Doesn’t that mean an especially skilled Arcane Blacksmith could have made me?]

“Well, that’s also a possibility.”

[How strong is a divine sword?]

I became very interested after hearing all that.

How strong could a sword that’s stronger than me be?

“Divine swords are mystical weapons strong enough to rip apart the sky or split the earth. It’s written that in a past war, someone wielding a divine sword killed over ten thousand people in a few dozen minutes.”

[Was that really a sword?]

“The weapons that God-rank Blacksmiths make are only called divine swords. Apparently, some of them aren’t in the shape of swords.”

“Apparently?”

“The only one I ever saw was the Flame Sword Ignis.”

[Oh, then how strong was that Ignis sword?]

“My Appraisal skill was still low at the time so this isn’t everything.”

Name: Flame Sword Ignis

Attack: 1800

Mana Conversion Rank SS

Skills: Grant Fire Magic, Grant Holy Flames, Unknown

“That’s what it was.”

[Ahh, I see. My apologies for trying to compete against it. There’s no way something like me could be a revered divine sword.]

“Don’t say that. You’re already a plenty good sword.”

[Are you comforting a magic sword like me? Old man, you’re a good person!]

“Nonsense. I’m also happy to meet an interesting sword as yourself!”

[Old Man Garth!]

“Sword!”

Fran got bored of our conversation and looked around the shop without even glancing at us.

“Hm. This breastplate is nice.”

Ten minutes later.

“Kuhahaha, sorry for leaving you all alone, young lady!”

“It’s okay.”

[I’m enough for Fran’s weapon. But would it be possible for you to make a scabbard?]

“Yeah, I’ll make you the best scabbard I can!”

[We don’t have that much money, but...we also need armor.]

“Makes sense. About how much is your budget?”

[Accounting for lodgings and medicine, we have 15,000 gil left.]

We could easily buy some cheap armor, but Garth was a renowned Arcane Blacksmith.

The problem was if he stocked armor that we could buy for 15,000 gil.

“I see. Great, I’ve taken a liking to you two. I’ll sell you a set of armor and a scabbard at that price.”

[I’m thankful for that, but is that really okay?]

“I don’t mind. So, what’ll you choose for armor? I may be a blacksmith, but I also craft leather goods. I can prepare anything made of metal or leather.”

[Hmm. What would you like?]

“Something light is better.”

“Then leather it is. Of course, I recommend increasing the armor’s strength by attaching steel to the important parts.”

“Then I’ll choose that.”

“What about your head?”

“I’d prefer nothing. It’ll block my vision.”

“Then how about an earring meant for beastfolk? There’re types that you don’t need to get your ear pierced for.”

“Un.”

“Then wait a bit.”

Old Man Garth brought out several pieces of equipment from a storage room.

“Here, try this on.”

He brought four items: Dress Armor of the Flame Cow's Horn, Gloves of the Paralysis Claw Cat, Boots of the Flightless Poison Dragon, Mythril Earring-Cat Race. Their defensive stats weren't bad at all, and their effects were really good. They even had the effects Grant Fire Resistance, Grant Impact Resistance, Grant Paralysis Resistance, Grant Poison Resistance, and Grant Magic Resistance.

They were way weaker than the Guild Master's or Dunadron's equipment, but they were likely a little stronger than the equipment the adventurers on the street had.

There was a juxtaposition of white and black as the color scheme, so it looked way better on Fran than I thought. All I could see of the dress armor was the white one piece dress and the black knee socks, but on the chest and other areas were reinforced with steel and leather, so it had plenty of defensive power.

In addition, he gave us two sets of well-made cotton clothes that lacked any defensive power.

[Is it okay to give such strong equipment?]

"I don't mind. A strong adventurer needs to have strong weapons. Most of all, how could I not be upset if I ever heard someone say that my equipment was worse than a magic sword. Well, I'm not losing any money out of this so don't worry."

[Fran, this is great.]

"Thank you."

"Make sure to show up here in the future as well. Since it's rare to have a chance to get a good look at an Intelligence Weapon."

[Don't do anything weird.]

"You're fine. I'll just use Appraisal and Identify."

[Well, that much isn't too difficult.]

"Also feel free to bring along some loot with you. I can make you some equipment for a good price if you bring the crafting materials."

That reminded of the demonic beast loot I had in my Dimensional Storage.

I gave up on selling it at the guild because it'd attract attention, but maybe that wouldn't be the case if we sold them to Old Man Garth and had him turn the loot into armor?

"Materials, we have."

[Yeah. If we give them to you, you can turn them into armor without us attracting lots of attention.]

"Hoo. I take it you have quite the collection of materials since you said all that."

[They aren't from small fries. They're Threat Levels D and C.]

It wasn't strange for a Threat Level C demonic beast to scare an entire nation. If one showed up near a city, the knights would mobilize.

Demonic beasts so strong that only adventurers rank B or higher could take them on.

[Do you have an empty room?]

"Yeah, the room over there's empty. Are you going to bring them here?"

[I already have them.]

"You even have an item pocket? But where is it..."

Fran didn't have an item pocket anywhere on her person.

Because the only things she had on were her clothes, her sword, and her sandals.

[It's my ability.]

"Oho. Interesting. For a sword to have an item box, that is...I never thought that could happen."

I ignored the old man who was muttering to himself and moved to the empty room.

It was likely originally a storage room. It was an ideal storage room as the floor was compacted dirt and the ceiling was high.

[Okay, I'm taking them out.]

The Tyrant Saber Tooth Tiger's hide, teeth, and claws. The Dopplesnake's fangs and scales. The Blast Tortoise's shell and leather. The room was filled with crafting materials.

I only told him that I had the Gluttony Slime Lord's loot rather than take it out. Because if I did, the whole room would be covered in slime. I should ask him to prepare a tub or something to keep it in later.

"This is...! D-Did you get all these? They're all high ranked C and D materials."

[That's right.]

"By yourself?"

[By myself. I flew at them using Telekinesis.]

"Hahahahaha! Amazing. I had no idea your abilities would be so diverse."

[My base abilities are low so I couldn't have beaten those demonic beasts without a bunch of skills.]

"This much is more than enough. I can make you some magnificent armor. The kind of armor that low rank adventurers couldn't even dream of."

Just what I'd expect from the loot of such strong demonic beasts.

"But I can't handle all this leather on my own. I'll need to ask some others that guy and that guy for help. And him, too——."

[Excuse me, old man?]

"Oh dear, sorry. I got excited since something fun came my way after so long. How much more do you have to surprise me before you're satisfied!"

He said that with a smile on his face.

“So you’ll make it?”

“Of course!”

[But it’ll cost a lot to hire the help of other craftsman at your level, right?]

“That’s right...even if you only brought basic materials, we wouldn’t accept your request for anything less than 30,000,000 gil.

[For real? Then there’s no way we can.]

“Is it okay if you leave all these materials with me?”

[Not at all. I don’t mind.]

“Then it’s simple. There’s more than enough materials here to make the young lady armor. I’ll buy the remaining materials off you. That should take care of the price, right?”

[We’d truly be grateful.]

“Then we have a deal.”

“How long will it take?”

“It takes a month.”

[That’s longer than I thought.]

“What’re you saying? That’s more than on the faster side! Well, since you brought all these materials, I don’t want to end up unable to finish the job. Since I’ll need to buy some other materials as well, it’ll take some more time.”

[There’s no helping it. It’s okay with you too, right, Fran?]

“Un. I look forward to it.”

“Yeah. Leave it to me!”

After that, I sliced the Slime Lord’s body into thin pieces and put it in an iron tub that Old Man Garth brought. He said even the slime had a use.

“I don’t see a magic crystal. Do you not have it?”

“We don’t.”

“I see. That’s a shame.”

[Can you use magic crystals on the armor?]

“Yeah. We mix it in during the creation process. As an example, if you use the Dopplesnake’s fangs on the armor, it’ll definitely have Poison Resistance . And if it’s used on a weapon, it’ll have the Deadly Venom effect. But if you add in the Dopplesnake’s magic crystal, the effects Poison Resistance [large] or Deadly Venom will be added. Magic crystals from other demonic beasts will probably have some effect as well, but the magic crystal from the demonic beast itself has the best affinity so it’s definitely the best.”

So, magic crystals had that use. It was a shame, but I already absorbed them all. I should hold on to any magic crystals that have skills I already have. I can absorb them anytime I want if I put them in Dimensional Storage, anyway.

[We’ll keep an eye out for them next time.]

“Yeah, that’s a good idea.”

[Then I guess we’ll be going now.]

“Bye.”

[Sorry for all the craziness you went through.]

“Hahaha. I’m hoping this is the end of that! Your scabbard will be done in four days so come by then.”

[Okay.]

We finished arrangements for the materials and we placed an order for some good armor. I sure was thankful for this lucky meeting.

[Fran, it looks good on you. You look just like a rookie adventurer.]

“Thanks.”

[Now then...do you need any underwear?]

“Not really.”

[A-Are you sure?]

Was it okay because she herself said she didn't need them?

No, of course not. The topic of underwear was definitely too high a hurdle to jump.

But if I run away here, then the only thing I'll be able to do later is run away as well!

Plus, Fran had definitely lost her girliness.

I need to go on the offensive!

[No. L-Let's go buy some underwear!]

Ten minutes after we left Old Man Garth's shop.

[It's here.]

“There's lots of flappy ones.”

Fran was talking about the women's clothing with lace on them that were displayed in the show window.

[It's because this is a women's shop.]

It was just a little, but my heart was starting to race. Though I don't have a heart.

Every man would probably react the same way.

And this was my first time going into a store like this even if I include my previous life.

"Welcome."

"Un."

"Oh? Are you an adventurer?"

The lady who came from inside the shop gave off a punk vibe.

Her extremely short, bright blue hair belonged more in cyberpunk than fantasy.

"So? What're you looking for? Underwear. We have everything from basic underwear to sexy ones."

'What should I buy?'

[Say what I say.]

'Okay.'

I should probably ask the employee to bring us what we want.

"Give me five pairs of underwear. Ones that are easy to wash."

"Uh huh."

"I also need clothes and underwear I can wear under my armor."

"Will five pairs of that be enough?"

"Un."

"The smallest size of underwear is over there. Which one piques your fancy?"

“Anything’s fine.”

“A cute little girl like you can’t wear this!”

It seemed like this woman used to be an adventurer. She said she got tired of there being no cute yet durable underwear that she could wear during adventures, so she made some herself.

It looked like she was working with the store’s owner to sell all kinds of goods for adventurers.

“For a pretty girl like yourself with your black hair, black eyes, black ears, and your white skin, things like this will look good.”

Wha-What? Black panties? And it even has an alluring hole in it for her tail!

“This is from the beastfolk series so there’s a hole for your tail. How’s it look?”

Hmm. But maybe this was too mature for Fran to wear?

I’m saying it’s too early for Fran to be so adult-like or to be spreading pheromones. Something cuter would be better.

Maybe the lady empathized with me, because she showed us something else.

“And there’s also this.”

Those were definitely striped panties. They were the type with white and light blue stripes!

“And also this one.”

Kugh. Nice! At a glance, it looked like a conservative, cream-colored pair of panties with little frills and ribbons attached to it!

One by one came those attractive pairs of panties. But not only were they highly elastic, but they were also durable.

“We also provide a hole cutting service for your tail further inside the shop.”

“Then I want this one and this one.”

“Great, great. And is there anything else you need?”

Is there anything else? Things that a girl needs... Facial cleanser? Ah, that's right. Toiletries.

“Toiletries, if you have them.”

“We do. We also keep things like that in stock.”

“Then that, too.”

“Okay.”

It seemed that they didn't stock bras. Could it be because this is the countryside? Or because civilization just hasn't reached that level yet?



I guess Fran was kind of small, or, rather, that it was like a cliff-face. Well, that was a trait of flat chests, so she didn't need one for now.

"Here are five pairs of underwear. And shirts and shorts made of a very breathable material. Do you have any long pants as well?"

"I do. Two of them."

"Okay. And here's soap and a towel for bathing."

So soap existed in this world. Could it be the same one as on Earth?

"This soap is made with alchemy and it is well liked for softening skin. It does so it's extremely popular with female adventurers."

Hoo. That sounded good. I was glad to hear that it had no smell, because if Fran smelled like flowers while we were out hunting, a demonic beast would detect her immediately.

We bought the clothes and daily necessities she recommended.

Maybe it was rare for a guest to buy so much all at once, because the lady was smiling happily the whole time.

She saw us off all the way until the entrance of the shop.

"Please come again!"

I'd better teach Fran how to do laundry. Because if the laundry's done poorly, she'll end up with only a single set of clothes.

Should I do it?

No, no. That's too dangerous in multiple ways. I should have her do it herself.

Because if Fran grows up and looks at me like I'm trash, I'll want to die.

And thus, thirty minutes later.

We were standing in front of an inn. We asked the lady to recommend us an inn, and she directed us to here. She said lots of female adventurers stayed here.

The exterior was clean so it didn't look too bad.

We went inside.

The interior was spotless and there were cute flowerpots arranged naturally.

I tested the corners with Telekinesis, but there wasn't any dust. Hm, this seemed like a good inn.

"Master, you're acting like a sister-in-law."

[What?!]

That's mean! This is for your sake! Fran!

"Welcome."

There was a young woman behind the counter. Could she be over twenty years old?

"Do you have any empty rooms?"

"For just one person?"

"Un, one person."

"Do you not have a guardian?"

So kids definitely can't get a room by themselves?

[Fran, show her your guild card.]

"Un. Here."

"Huh? Is this real?"

"Un."

She looked at the guild card for a while, then it looked like she was convinced.

“Well, if we’re sure of your identity, then I suppose there’s no issue. One night is 300 gil. To add two meals, it’s 400 gil. And we only have private rooms. Which will you choose?”

[Let’s pick one with a meal included.]

“One night with meals included.”

“Understood. Then here is your room key. Please make sure to take care of your valuables.”

“Un.”

After that, she gave us a tedious explanation about the prices of household essentials, but it all went in one ear and out the other.

She explained that things like lanterns and hot water worked one way or another because of magic or tools. I was also surprised to find out they had toothbrushes, but it also worked because of purification magic.

“Please give this ticket for food at the restaurant. We also run the restaurant, so please come at any time.”

We got two tickets. They had a good system, since we could get food as long as the restaurant was open.

But since we still had a lot of demonic beast meat left, we could save money by eating that instead. Maybe it’d be best to only sleep in the inn and for me to prepare the meals from now on.

I could cook a lot all at once and put it in Dimensional Storage. Then I’d have lots of piping hot food ready at any time for Fran.

The problem was where to cook.

She’d get tired of eating only plain roasted meat or soup, so I needed proper cooking

utensils to make a variety of food.

We went up the steps to the second floor that the owner directed us to.

The key number was 204. Ooh, it was a corner room.

“Is it here?”

[This room isn’t half bad.]

In the well-cleaned room was a bed and desk set, along with a portable dresser. There was also a wardrobe, so it looked like we could relax here. There were also places to hang weapons on the wall.

It seems I can’t look down on this inn.

“Master, is this the right place?”

[It is. What’s wrong?]

“Such a good room?”

Ahh, so that’s what she meant.

For Fran who had spent about four years as a slave, a room like this must be unbelievably luxurious.

How heartbreak! I’ll be sure to make you happy! I should reassure her, first.

[No, this room isn’t that good. It’s normal.]

“Really?”

[Really. Even after this, we’ll be able to stay in rooms this good whenever.]

“Uwah.”

Fran lifted both her fists towards the air and shouted.

“I’m so glad I followed Master here.”

[Is that so?]

“I’ve won at life.”

[You’re going that far!]

“This is my time.”

Hm, it seemed like she was overjoyed.

Though it was hard to tell from her face.

I’m glad she liked the room.

We lazed around the inn for a while before I realized that we’d forgotten to pack all our things.

[Hey, let’s go buy stuff before the sun sets.]

“Buy what?”

[Seasonings and cooking utensils. You want to eat good food even when we’re out camping, right?]

“Un.”

[That’s why we need seasoning.]

“That’s important. Our highest priority.”

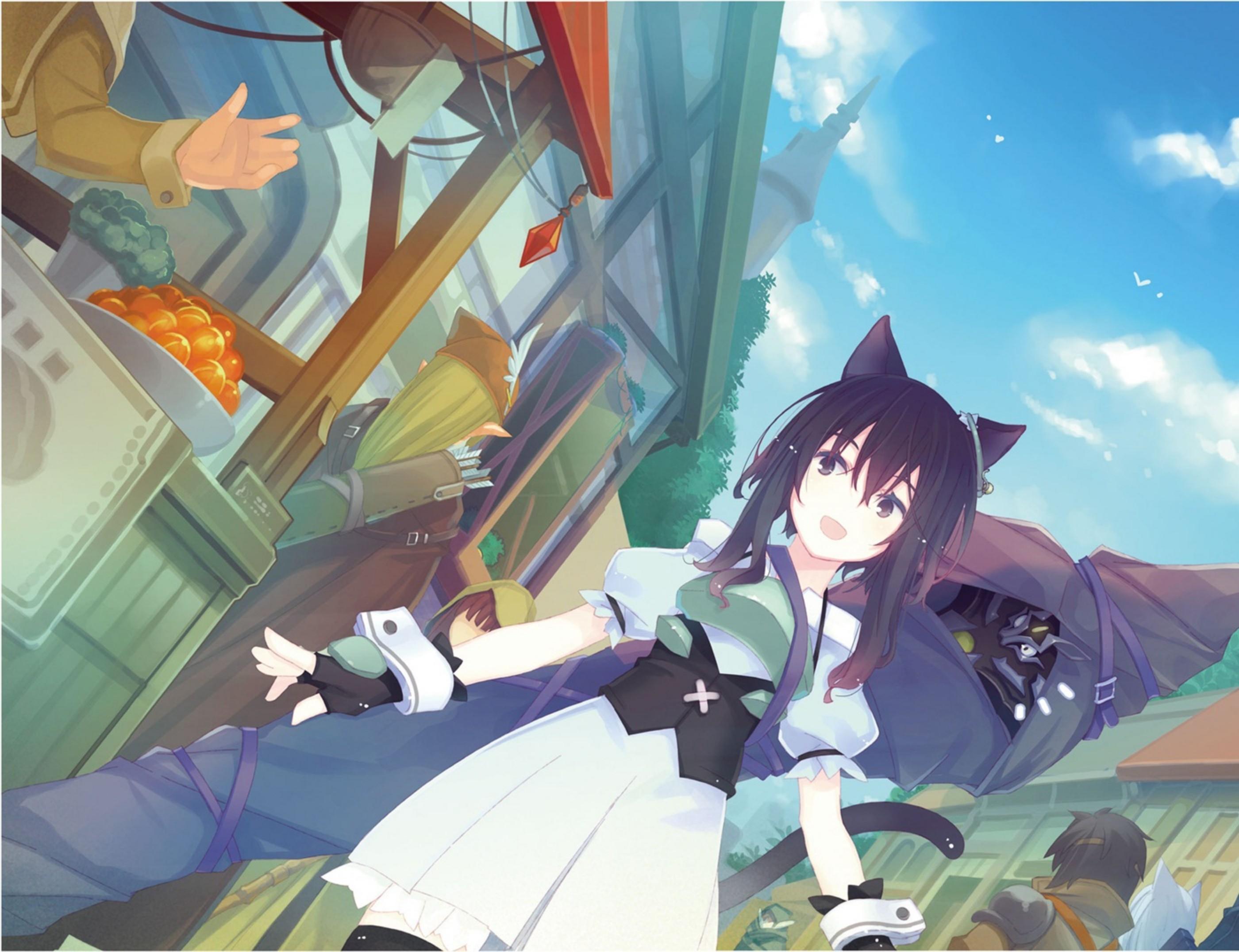
[Then let’s go to the general store. If we ask an employee at the inn, she should tell us where we should go.]

“Okay.”

[We’re not leaving anything here, but lock the door for now.]

“Un.”

We asked the lady at the inn for a recommendation on which shop to go to.



She said we'd find it right away when we left.

[Looks like it's here.]

It said on the sign, 'Saber Toothed Tiger General Store.'

"Saber Toothed Tiger?"

[That doesn't fit a general store at all.]

"But this is the only one."

As Fran said, this was the only general store in the area.

There was no helping it. We should ready ourselves and walk in.

Ring ring.

"Welcome."

The inside looked like a perfectly normal general store. As long as you exclude the muscly owner.

Though in letters, it was a simple 'welcome,' but out loud, his voice was extremely deep. It was as if his manliness wouldn't allow him to speak in any way except strongly.

"Is this a general store?"

"That's right. People often mistake this place for somewhere else, but this is, without a doubt, a general store."

No surprise here. Because his name's Saber Toothed Tiger. Not to mention the shop owner was so muscular that he seemed to belong more in a dungeon than a place like this.

And I could tell from his movements.

Name: Rufus Age: 41 Years Old

Race: Human

Job: Merchant

Lv: 30

HP: 188 MP: 73 Strength: 150 Agility: 77

Skills: Transport 3, Dismantle 4, Harvest 2, Arithmetic 1, Business 2, War Hammer Techniques 4, War Hammer Wielding 6, Pursue 2, Cold Resistance 2, Cooking 1, Energy Manipulation, Giant Killer

Title: Giant Slayer

Equipment: Merchant's Frock, Earring of Arithmetic

His status was clearly not that of a merchant. A medium rank adventurer. Those were combat skills.

He didn't seem at all the type to be helping people shop or doing math.

“Are you an adventurer?”

“I used to be. My dream since ages ago was to open my own shop. It’s been just about three years since I retired from being an adventurer and opened this shop.”

“What’s with the name? It’s not cute at all.”

Miss Fran, speak a bit more tactfully!

“Hahaha, people ask that all the time. Truth is, I thought it was a good idea to have a special trait, so I decided to put up a decoration.”

The storeowner pointed at the stuffed saber toothed tiger head hanging on the wall. It had an animated expression, as if it was about to roar.

“Cool.”

“Right? But it’s not too popular with women. Even though it’s so cool.”

Is it really okay to be in this shop? If the women at the inn hadn't told us about this place, I would've run out of here immediately.

I looked around the shop while Fran and the owner were talking, and though I first thought the shelves were only filled with spices, there was also a healthy amount of daily necessities.

"Shoot, I've been keeping you from shopping. Please take your time and look around."

[I'll tell you what to get.]

"Un."

I wanted salt and expensive flavorings like sugar and spices. We should also buy plates and spoons and silverware like that.

That aside, wasn't this place way to carefree? Unlike Japan, this world's security was way too lax. There were probably burglaries here.

No, that wasn't right. The ex-adventurer shop owner wouldn't miss a petty, everyday thief. He likely kept all his wares on display because he was confident in his ability to catch a would-be thief.

The last things we bought totaled at 3,000 gil and we left the shop.

Maybe he thought we were important customers, because he gave us an enthusiastic, "Please come again."

[Now we have 40,000 gil left.]

"What do we buy next?"

[I want to buy potions, but...]

We couldn't even afford the most expensive potions.

"We have recovery magic."

[But isn't the level low? Only enough for a temporary fix.]

“What if we level it up?”

[I thought about that, too.]

I had 27 Self-Evolution points left. I needed 2 to level up the skill, so I could max the level of even a level 1 skill. I didn’t mind increasing the skill level, but I didn’t want to spend all the points.

[There’re a few skills I want to level up.]

“What are they?”

An example would be Sword Techniques.

After the test at the Adventurer’s Guild, the Guild Master said that Dragon Fang was a mid rank Sword Technique. Level 7 is mid-rank. Then did that mean, if I leveled it up to 10, it would end up becoming a high rank skill?

That was what I expected.

“Un. I think so too.”

[Right?]

Because the max level of Sword Techniques depended on the level of Sword Wielding, I needed to max out Sword Wielding so that I could max Sword Techniques. That’s why I was having so much difficulty spending the points.

The next candidate is Clone Creation. It was currently an absolutely useless skill, but what if I leveled it up? Would I be able to use it in combat like the Dopplesnake? And when we’re filling out forms or going shopping, I could use my clone to act as Fran’s guardian, thus reducing any potentially annoying roadblocks.

Then we could’ve avoided the difficulty of getting a room at the inn.

“That sounds good.”

[Right?]

Next were Instantaneous Regeneration, negative status resistance skills, Physical Attack Resistance, and other skills like that that would keep Fran from dying. They were pretty simple, but they might keep Fran from dying if she's ever backed in a corner. In addition, I heard that skills like those were high rank skills that were especially difficult to obtain.

A single direct attack from a middle rank or higher demonic beast would knock out Fran since she was still low-leveled, so I thought it was best to be extremely cautious.

"I didn't notice that."

[It wouldn't hurt us to level up a skill like Instant Regeneration.]

Adding healing magic onto that would likely add an enhanced effect.

Thinking like that, I felt that Instant Regeneration would be a good choice, but it was important that healing magic could be used on other people.

Rather than raising the level of a few skills to some degree, I'd rather increase one skill to the max.

[Well, they're all good skills, regardless.]

And after we repeated this debate back at the inn, we decided to level up recovery magic. Because I felt it was convenient to be able to heal oneself to beyond one's original stats. And because even if Fran was injured, I could always heal her.

And as an added result, we got Healing Magic 1.

It was the advanced form of restoration magic, just like how fire magic turned into flame magic.

The spells we got from Healing Magic 1 were Regen Heal and Greater Heal. Regen Heal was a normal healing spell that closed wounds. Greater Heal was a stronger healing spell that could even reattach nearly cut-off limbs. They were both useful spells.

We also got the title, Healing Arts User. It was probably the same as Flame Arts User.

[This means we also got all the healing magics.]

“Un.”

[What do you want to do tomorrow? Want to go look for a request at the Adventurer’s Guild? We can have some fun for a few days, though, since we still have money.]

“I want to look for a request.”

[Is one that takes us out of the city okay?]

“It’s okay.”

[Then let’s go to the guild tomorrow.]

“Un. Working as an adventurer sounds fun.”

[Yeah. We need to spend some time increasing your level.]

“And after that?”

[What do you want to do? You can do anything you want.]

“Anything I want...”

[Is there something you want to do?]

“Un...?”

[Hahahaha. Take your time and think about it. Since we have lots of time.]

“Un. I will.”

CHAPTER 3

ADVENTURER'S GUILD AND A PROMISE

Our first morning at the inn.

It was natural for Fran to mumble that she didn't know where she was.

Well, I don't sleep, so I didn't have to wake up.

I woke up Fran who wasn't much of a morning person and got her dressed.

I cleaned her body with purification magic, and I washed her face with water I made with magic.

Fran had short cut hair, long at the sides and slightly curly at the ends. Because of her curly hair, her head looked like a bird's nest in the morning, and I didn't forget to tidy up her hair with water.

"Hello."

[How'd you sleep?]

"Like a log."

After that, we went to the restaurant and ate breakfast.

"Hello. The set course is here!"

The server set down a wooden tray in front of Fran.

On the tray was hard, black bread, a rolled omelet, two sausages, and a hard-boiled egg. It also came with a small bowl of soup.

[How is it?]

"Tasty."

After being a slave for so long, it looked like Fran was really enjoying her food. She was scarfing it all up.

Good, good. Eat well and grow.

'But Master's cooking is definitely better.'

She said the same thing when she ate dinner last night.

[Haha, there's no need to say that.]

'For real. I want to eat Master's cooking.'

This was natural since I maxed out my Cooking skill. It was strange that the best cook in this city was a sword.

Perhaps it was thanks to my memories from my previous life, but I could make more kinds of food than Fran despite our identical skill levels.

Even though we both had the Cooking Master title.

Well, I guess this means no matter how high your level, it's impossible to make food that doesn't exist in this world.

In the future, I may have to come up with a way to both cook and preserve food on a large scale.

[After we take a request and leave the city, I'll make you lunch.]

"I can't wait. Let's go."

[Then we'd better go find a request.]

"Un."

And so, we went to the Adventurer's Guild.

"Hello."

“Good morning. Have you come to get a request?”

“Un.”

“The requests board is over there. Because you are a G rank adventurer, please take care as you can only take F or G rank requests. They will be on the far left.”

We took a look at the G rank requests, first.

Because there weren’t many G rank adventurers to begin with and it was early in the morning, there was nobody in front of the board.

[Collect herbs, hunt wild pigs, weed a field, clean trash from a road?]

“My energy’s gone.”

[Same here. Plus the reward is small.]

How will the F rank requests look?

[It’s a little better but...]

Eliminate five goblins, saving Fanged Rats, collecting mushrooms in the forest.

They were all extremely dull. But these were the only requests we could take.

Fran is clearly under-leveled, so I guess we should hunt small fries until her level goes up.

“Then this one.”

[Collect herbs, huh. Well, I guess this’ll be fine for our first one?]

Our target was heal grass, an herb used to make rank 5 potions.

There were lots of them in the forest.

“This one.”

“Okay. You have selected this request. You’re all set.”

“Un.”

“Do you know what heal grass looks like? If not, we do have a reference here.”

“It’s okay.”

“Understood. If you complete five requests, you can become an F rank adventurer, so please do your best.”

“Un. Thanks.”

“Of course.”

It seemed like Nel-san was in a really good mood after the commotion yesterday. Thank goodness.

[Great, then let’s go!]

“Un.”

We were able to cross the gate easily by showing our guild card. The gatekeeper may have recognized Fran, because he was surprised after finding out that she was an adventurer.

[Which way do you want to go?]

“Um... That way.”

[And why that way?]

“A feeling.”

That was a good answer. It wasn’t like it was an urgent request, so we could work however we wanted.

[Let’s also pick up some other herbs while we’re getting the heal grass. That way, we

might be able to complete another request when we get back.]

“Master is a genius.”

[Hahaha. Feel free to praise me more.]

“Master is an amazing genius.”

We walked carefree through the forest.

We already collected the needed amount of heal grass.

We also collected lots of different herbs, mushrooms, and fruits.

By using the Collection, Herbology, and Cooking skills, we could tell what plants were useful.

In addition, Sense Danger was useful. It told us the how dangerous a poisonous substance was even if we didn't know how best to use that material. In other words, we could sense what materials could be best used as poison.

Because we could store as much as we wanted in Dimensional Storage, we collected everything that we were curious about.

“Master.”

[Yeah]

Fran suddenly stopped in her tracks.

But I wasn't surprised because I also detected something.

[Are they goblins? There're more than a dozen of them.]

“Un.”

[But there sure are a lot of goblins around here.]

Fran already had her hand on my handle and was fully ready for combat. I didn't stop

her.

A goblin mob was also easy pickings for Fran, so it was perfect for farming experience points.

I wouldn't recommend this for normal beginners, though.

[Are they surrounding a group of adventurers?]

"Over there."

[Three adventurers. And as for the goblins, there are...]

"Thirteen."

[There're even high rank goblins as well.]

Goblin Soldier, Goblin Thief, and Goblin Archer types seemed to be leading the mob.

In contrast, the adventurers looked to still be noobs. They had cheap equipment on their bodies and they were clearly deathly frightened by the goblin mob surrounding them.

[One warrior, one archer, and one magician. They have a balanced team, but it must be tough since the goblins are right up next to them.]

In addition, all of them had received damage. The magician seemed to have suffered a massive injury.

"I want to save them."

[Okay.]

"I'm going to cut down their numbers with magic then end them all."

At the same time, we cast earth magic.

I cast Stone Barrage, a weak spell that shot small rocks like bullets from a gun. But because I loaded five times more mana than normal, it was as if each of the rocks was

shot out of a cannon; they were strong enough to hit multiple targets if they were bunched up.

It seemed like this technique was only possible for someone with the Magician skill like me. Unfortunately, the skill couldn't be shared with Fran so she could only use it normally.

We could probably take them all out with fire magic, but we were afraid to use start a fire in the forest.

“Stone Arrow.”

[Stone Barrage.]

Fran’s spell took out one, my spell took out five; altogether, we defeated six goblins in an instant. Among them was one Goblin Thief.

<Fran has achieved level 4>

Fran’s level went up. I guess among the small fry goblins, there is always a high rank one.

The goblins had no idea what just happened, and they all devolved into chaos. In that opening, Fran suddenly approached the goblins.

[There’re seven left.]

“Hup.”

She mowed down two of them while they were distracted, and she stood between the adventurers and the goblins.

Of course, I was doing my part as well. I used Stone Arrow to take care of the Goblin Archer that was giving the adventurers the most trouble.

“Huh? Why’s a kid here?”

“She’s strong!”

The adventurers were surprised.

A Soldier recovered from the surprise that had stricken many of the goblins, and led the charge towards us.

“Gyagyaooh!”

Oh my. They decided to charge at a strong opponent without a moment’s hesitation.

Though they were goblins, they had good judgement.

[That won’t do you any good! Stone Barrage!]

I didn’t need a break anyway, so I continued to cast spells even during combat.

I already finished casting Stone Barrage.

The two goblins to our right vomited blood after getting hit and subsequently lost their lives.

The two goblins that came at Fran from the left couldn’t even come close to equaling her.

“Slow.”

The last two goblins were cut down in an instant by a Double Slash.

In just twenty seconds, the adventurers’ situation had made a complete reversal, and they stared blankly at us.

A part of me wanted to continue looking at their dumbfounded faces, but leaving their injured party member as he was dangerous.

[Healing magic would fix this.]

I checked his status, and saw that only his HP had gone down.

There weren’t any torn limbs, either.

[A normal heal is enough.]

“——Healing Light, Circle Heal.”

A Healing Magic 7 spell, Circle Heal created an area of HP regen.

The two who were fine had still received a little damage, so she must have decided to heal them all.

She's such a nice girl!

“Such a small kid can use Circle Heal?”

“Wow! That's a medium rank spell!”

They were surprised. The female archer's eyes widened in shock at the male warrior's words.

“And isn't that also a magic sword?”

Whooa, she realized what I was.

Well, I definitely had a more noble appearance than other swords, so someone with discerning eyes would notice. Though this was quite a pain.

“M-More importantly, Eustace! Are you okay?!”

“I am?”

“Huh? Your wounds are all better?”

The magician who had been badly injured was also perfectly fine.

You'd better watch out, though. If any of you try to pick on her or use her, you'll be in for a world of trouble!

“Are you okay?”

“Ah, yes. You saved us.”

“Thanks. C’mon, you too!”

“Huh? Ah, thanks.”

Hmm. They started with a greeting. That was the basics.

Regardless, they looked different than the idiots from yesterday.

“Are you, um...an adventurer?”

“Un.”

“Excuse me, but would it be okay if I asked you your name?”

“Fran.”

The adventurers exchanged glances after Fran told them her name.

‘Do you know her?’

‘No. There’s no way I wouldn’t know about such a skilled kid.’

‘Yeah, I think so too.’

‘I don’t know who she is, either.’

That was what it felt like they were saying.

“My name’s Krall. She’s Lily, and my friend over there is Eustace.”

He gave us very polite introductions.

But it seemed like Fran had already lost interest in them.

“Okay. Later.”

It seemed like she wanted to check her leveled up status right away.

[Are you okay? Who knows, they might give us a reward.]

‘I’d feel bad for them.’

Well, is that so. They were clearly noobs. There was no way we could expect an amazing reward. It seemed more likely that we’d end up extorting them of something.

But Krall, the warrior who seemed to be the leader of their group, grabbed hold of Fran as she tried to leave.

“P-Please wait.”

“Hm?”

“These goblins that you killed belong to you.”

“What? You mean this young lady killed all these goblins? What’re you talking about?”

“That’s enough, now quiet down!”

“After you saved our lives, there’s no way we could also accept your help.”

His heart was in the right place.

He might end up peeved if we refused.

[Shouldn’t it be okay to pick up the loot from the high rank goblins?]

“Okay. I’ll only take the high rank ones.”

“Huh? There were high rank monsters here as well?! ”

Hey, Krall’s friend, you didn’t even know that?

It was admittedly difficult to tell by their appearance, but high rank ones were bigger and their horns were a bigger longer as well.

“Un.”

Fran disregarded the three surprised adventurers and harvested the materials.

The soldier, thief, and archer adventurers' faces made a drastic change.

Fran put the horns and magic crystals in her pocket at her side.

The pocket was a ruse. She pretended to put the items in her pocket but instead put them in Dimensional Storage.

"There were three high rank demonic beasts?"

"Wasn't this super dangerous? We need to tell the guild..."

"No, wait a sec. Were they really high rank ones?"

"Most likely. Those three are definitely bigger than the rest."

They were more bewildered than we thought they'd be.

It seemed like a problem had arisen.

"What's wrong?"

"You see, if three high rank demonic beasts show up at the same time, we need to report this to the guild."

"Why?"

"Does that mean you don't know?"

"Un?"

"If there're high rank ones, there might even be a King."

When compiled, the adventurers' explanations went like this:

When a goblin mob has a King, the mob's cohesion improves markedly and its combat power goes up as well.

I knew this as well.

Also, the number of demonic beasts would increase, the number that would die easily decreased, and the number of high rank evolved demonic beasts would increase.

Then their combat ability and their numbers would increase, resulting in a worst-case scenario.

And if the mob reaches a certain size, a Queen is born. The reason why I didn't find a Queen in the plains was probably because there were too many strong demonic beasts that stopped the goblins from reaching a big enough size.

The important thing was that when a King and a Queen get together, all of their offspring are hobgoblins.

And hobgoblins had a threat level of F. One rank higher than goblins. Apparently, even if a mob of normal goblins is led by a King, they can reach Threat Level D. In that vein, if a King leads a mob of hobgoblins, they would reach Threat Level C.

"If that happens, then there's nothing we can do. It'd end up as a demonic beast catastrophe."

"I can't even imagine how many towns would disappear if that happened."

I see. To the adventurers in this area, this was a matter of life and death.

Though I could only see the goblins as nothing more than food, this was also a threat to Fran.

Then it was best to get rid of those goblins as soon as possible.

"We will go report this right away to the Adventurer's Guild."

As they said that, they picked up the corpses of the high rank goblins.

Because even if they didn't have any of their loot, their corpses should act as sufficient evidence.

"Un."

“Then please pardon us.”

“Thank you so much for today.”

“I don’t really know what happened, but it seems like you saved us. Thanks!”

We ended up getting our hands on the loot from the goblins, and we saved some promising young people, so this didn’t end too badly.

[I’ll absorb the magic crystals now.]

Fran took out the magic crystals in a place far from the newbie party, and I absorbed them.

Though they only had skills I already had, collecting these minor bits of experience was important.

Thank you very much for the meal.

“Um, could you take a look at my status?”

[Yeah, okay. I’ll take a look.]

“Un.”

Name: Fran Age: 12 years old

Race: Beastfolk. Black Cat

Job: Spellsword

Lv: 4

HP: 41 MP: 29 Strength: 28 Agility: 49

Her stats went up by a lot. Though her Strength and MP should have only gone up by 1, they actually went up by 4. This was because of her job, Spellsword. I told Fran about her stat increases.

“Feels good.”

[Me too. Let's keep this up and level up.]

“Oh yeah.”

Fran even looked cute when she expressionlessly raised her fist toward the sky.

Great, I should give it my all and find some prey as well!

One hour after we parted with the newbie party.

We were battling a goblin mob.

“Double Slash!”

“Gyahagh!”

“Shuguu!”

She sliced apart two goblins with a Sword Technique that repeated a sequence of a downward slash then an upward slash.

<Fran has achieved level 9>

“It went up again.”

[Yeah. Let's check it later.]

The spell I cast tore through a goblin and Fran's Sword Technique tore another apart.

But their numbers still hadn't decreased at all.

At first, we hunted multiple goblin mobs for their experience points. But their numbers continued to increase the farther we went until there were eventually over a hundred of them.

We definitely didn't want to fight so many of them. But maybe this was a matter of pride, or maybe they were hungering for our experience points, but they were chasing

us to an almost excessive degree.

The reason why their numbers swelled so much was likely because we were near their cave. There were also high rank ones among them, so they had a chain of command.

[Here they come again!]

“Un!”

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Countless stones flew between the trees towards Fran. There were also chunks of wood thrown at us.

The goblins surrounded us and threw those object simultaneously.

There was no way we could dodge those stones when they were coming at us from all directions.

“Master!”

[Yeah, leave it to me. Fire Wall!]

Fire Wall surrounded Fran’s body and protected her from the stones.

But their attack didn’t end there.

[They’re coming!]

“Un!”

Fran got into a combat stance as she held me.

And when the wall of flames disappeared—.

“Gruaah!”

“Gyogyoga!”

“Gyaar!”

Ten goblins ran at Fran.

One of them ran too fast. It collided into the Fire Wall and was engulfed in flames.

“Heavy Slash!”

Fran dodged the goblins' attacks and weaved in between them while wielding me.

She immediately mowed down five of them.

“Gyaha!”

“Kugh...”

“Gisaha!”

“Agh!”

Fran wasn't able to avoid all their attacks and red blood flew from her small body.

But Fran endured that terrible pain and swung her sword without a hint of fear.

I suggested that we set Dull Pain, but that skill also dulled her senses so it was also dangerous to equip.

“Hyaap!”

The normally composed Fran yelled loudly as she ran at the goblins.

She defeated ten more of them.

This battle repeated itself multiple times until there were nearly forty goblin corpses strewn around her.

But it didn't look as though Fran had made a dent in the goblins' numbers.

[Middle Heal!]

“Huff huff...”

[Hey, Fran! Are you okay?]

“...I’m fine.”

[Let’s run away. There’re tons of more efficient ways to get experience points.]

We underestimated them.

Both the goblins and this fight.

With this body, I couldn’t feel pain or fatigue, and even if I got destroyed, I could restore myself immediately.

For better or worse, I had never struggled against anything except strong demonic beasts.

That’s why I was careless. Though I did think of telling Fran that it was dangerous or that it was too soon for her, I truly thought that she’d be okay as long as I was with her.

As a result, we were struggling against all these goblins.

But now it was too late to regret that decision.

Fran had automatic HP recovery and we could heal Fran’s wounds with healing magic to keep her from dying. This way, we could win as long as Fran kept fighting.

But how much pain would Fran have to suffer and how much blood would she have to lose until then?

Fran must not have been prepared for this.

We needed to retreat before Fran became terrified or got traumatized.

[They’re coming again! We still have time to run away!]

By using Buoyancy and Aerial Jump, we could escape.

“I’m not running away.”

[Wha-What are you saying?! There’s no point in feeling any more pain than this! We can get more experience points from hunting bigger demonic beasts!]

Is she being stubborn?

“There is a point.”

Fran curtly mumbled this and held me up in a combat stance.

I could see from her face that there was strong resolve welling up inside her.

“If Master is here, then I won’t die. I won’t die and I can handle the pain. I can get used to the fight. And I can gain experience points.”

[Fran...]

“I thought earlier that I need more dangerous fights to get stronger. This is the perfect battleground.”

She said that and smiled a smile overflowing with malice.

Hm, I was underestimating Fran. Fran had already prepared herself for this.

It was me and me alone who wasn’t prepared.

Not prepared to watch Fran get hurt.

I was going to make her stronger? Of course she would get stronger if I set the boss monster on fire.

But is that true strength?

Experience and willpower. If she doesn’t endure injuries or pain from real battles, wouldn’t it be meaningless if only her level went up?

Fran already knew that well.

“Master, help me.”

She's amazing. Her resolve was completely different from a privileged, white picket fence raised person like me.

Great. I should prepare myself, too. I'm ready! I won't hesitate any more. I need to get rid of my carefree attitude.

She isn't some defenseless kitten unable to do anything without my protection. She's a little predator.

[Leave healing to me!]

“Un! Here I go!”

Fran took off. She charged like that at the goblin mob.

“Haaaa!”

“Gyogyaoh!”

And she swung her sword with all her might.

Fran's swing, powered all the strength in her arms, sliced through armor and a helmet and the goblin inside like they were made of bamboo.

Fran hardly noticed the goblin's minute reaction to getting stabbed through the heart by a sword traveling at breakneck speed.

She tore through the armed goblins as if she was testing out all her techniques.

This wasn't a fight to simply defeat her enemies; she was trying to find her own limit and gain experience points.

Stronger, faster. And better.

To get even one step closer to the ideal self imprinted in her mind, she swung her sword countless times and sliced apart goblins.

Every now and then, a counterattack connected.

While Fran was stopped momentarily by the pain, a goblin's spear pierced through her shoulder and a dagger stabbed her leg.

There were even times when the goblins, fully prepared to die, would bite Fran or pick up the equipment of their fallen comrades.

But Fran never succumbed to fear.

Because she absorbed this situation into her blood and bones, until fighting became perfectly natural.

Fran never stopped moving, even when she got cut by a knife or hit by a rock, to stop the same attacking from connecting a second time.

I was shocked as I saw Fran's resolve while I fought alongside her.

I supported her as much as I could to help her gain real combat experience.

As I watched over Fran, I could clearly see her start to change.

"Hah! Yah!"

Didn't she just move incredibly fast? She didn't activate Sword Techniques, but it just looked like she used Triple Slash.

Same with just now. It looked like she used Double Slash——no, she surpassed Double Slash.

I thought she had mastered Sword Wielding, but...

The truth was, she had failed to use it at all.

No, isn't that to be expected?

Even if she suddenly gained advanced Sword Wielding, there's no way her body or her brain could adapt to that so easily. This wasn't a problem because until now, she'd only

fought small fires where the battle would end in an instant.

The gap between her body and her skills was beginning to narrow while in such a dangerous fight.

The nimble sword skills she used until now only had speed. Even her attacks that I thought were diverse were actually monotonous and easy to read.

But now that was different.

She was able to dodge more of the goblins' attacks, and the accuracy of her attacks increased greatly.

She adapted to her own attacks and movements, ridding herself of any unnecessary actions.

In other words, she became one with the sword.

Fran's mind, body, and ability all showed immense growth in an incredibly short time.

Two hours later.

"Haa...haa..."

[Fran, good job!]

"Un...!"

The goblins' corpses were scattered across the ground, and blood and bodily fluids coated the earth. In other words, we were in a hellish landscape.

Fran was barely able to keep herself upright by using me as a cane.

She was uninjured thanks to healing magic.

But her stamina was utterly drained, so she was breathing heavily.

Her body was covered in her own blood, goblin blood, and mud so no part of her was clean.

Her armor was dyed a dark red. Her dress armor was especially damaged so it needed repairs.

If I had attacked the goblins as well, she wouldn't have struggled so much.

But this struggle was necessary.

Her level may have only gone up by 8, but Fran's growth exceeded that.

Because while was killing the goblins, she made sure to cut apart their magic crystals as well. Even during the battle, Fran accurately aimed at the goblins' weak points despite their erratic movements.

[——Stamina Heal.]

I repeatedly used a spell that restored stamina. But it did nothing to restore mental exhaustion.

[I'll keep an eye out for danger so you rest.]

Maybe I should check what loot's available and absorb some magic crystals.

“I'll help.”

[H-Hey wait. Are you okay?]

“We can finish up here then go.”

[Yeah...since the King didn't show up. I guess it'd be best to get everything we need here.]

“Un.”

[Then I'll leave the weapons and horns to you. I'll focus on absorbing their magic crystals.]

“Okay.”

Thirty minutes later.

[Almost done.]

“I got a lot.”

[Yeah. My Magic Crystal Count went up by almost 200.]

There were many high rank ones and over a hundred small fry goblins.

[But no more demonic beasts came near here.]

“Un. It was easy.”

There was no way demonic beasts didn’t smell this place when it was reeking of blood.

But all demonic beasts that approached this place would suddenly change directions and leave.

Despite having low intelligence, maybe they felt afraid after seeing such a horrible scene.

Like Fran said, it was a relief that we were able to collect everything without incident.

[I also got a few new skills. They look like they’d be fun to use.]

The greatest pay off from this fight was obviously Fran’s growth.

And beyond that, there were multiple benefits as well.

Excluding any that were broken or rusty, we collected fifty steel and bronze weapons.

There was even some armor. Well, they smelled and were dirty so we had to throw away the majority of them.

We also found some items imbued with mana so it was a huge find.

And these were our new skills:

Quick Casting, Acrobatics, Kicking Techniques, Kicking, Necromancy, Poison Absorption, Poison Magic, Axe Techniques, Unrelenting Spirit.

I got these skills from a Hobgoblin Dark Mage, Hobgoblin Necromancer, Hobgoblin Grappler, and Hobgoblin Gladiator.

Well, there was a problem.

[So there were hobgoblins here.]

“Un.”

These new skills came from the new types of hobgoblin.

Their stats were on the same level as the Goblin King that I killed a while ago.

Then does that mean the Goblin Queen was already born and is spawning hobgoblins?

[Hey, do goblins grow quickly?]

“Un. Apparently they mature in ten days.”

[They’re just like insects. Doesn’t that make them dangerous?]

[We should go back to the Adventurer’s Guild and report this. I’d like for just us to hunt them, but there might be a lot more damage if we leave the situation as is.]

“Un.”

I was going to store only the hobgoblin corpses when——.

I sensed a human approaching.

[Fran!]

“Un.”

It’d be dangerous if someone saw me floating, so I quickly returned to Fran. She

grabbed onto my handle without batting an eye and put me on her back.

After a few seconds, several adventurers appeared from the far end of the forest.

The one leading them may have been a dwarf. He was moving unimaginably fast for someone with such a stocky body type. I also saw the beginners from before that we saved.

“Over there!”

“Hey, aren’t these all goblins?”

“What the hell happened here...?!”

[That saves us some trouble.]

Krall’s party reported the goblins’ activity, and a number of people were dispatched.

“Young lady! Are you okay?!”

“Are you injured?”

“I’m fine.”

“This is...did you do all this?”

“Un.”

Fran nodded her head and all ten of the adventurers’ faces showed shocked expressions.

“You defeated all of these goblins...by yourself?”

“If that’s true then that means you’re at the level of a rank E...no, if it was in a wide-open place like this where they came at you all at once and not a narrow den, then you’re on par with a rank D adventurer.”

“What?! Rank D?”

“For real?”

They were getting all excited for some reason.

Adventurers' ranks correlate with monsters' threat levels, right?

Adventurers can take down demonic beasts of the same level if they prepare enough and work together in a party. And adventurers can solo demonic beasts that are one rank beneath them.

In other words, a rank E adventurer can hunt threat level E demonic beasts when in a party of four to six other adventurers. And a rank E adventurer has to be able to take out a rank F demonic beast by him or herself.

[Let's see, a single goblin is threat level G, ten of them are level F, and a hundred are rank E.]

At the very least, Fran who killed a hundred goblins by herself was as strong as a rank D adventurer. In addition, there were over a hundred goblins with a dozen high rank goblins mixed in, and on top of all that, she took them all on in the forest where the goblins had the advantage. The adventurers seemed to evaluate her more highly because of all that.

The dwarf who seemed to be their leader was giving an explanation to his comrades.

That's right, that's right. It felt nice to hear them compliment Fran. You can complement her more.

Fran didn't seem to care much, and she ignored the dwarf to drop a hobgoblin corpse at their feet.

"Here."

"This is a hobgoblin?"

"There's some over there, too."

"And you mean there were four of them?"

"We're already at the point where hobgoblins are leaving their den!"

This seemed to be quite the serious situation.

If left like alone for ten days, there would be a goblin stampede, or more properly, an invasion.

“Oh dear, my apologies. I have yet to introduce myself. I’m Alibont. A D rank adventurer in Alessa. Could you tell me your name?”

“Fran.”

“Are you a traveler? Thank you for stopping all these goblins here.”

“Un? I’m an adventurer in Alessa.”

“What? No, but I’ve lived in Alessa for over ten years and I’ve never seen you before...”

His face showed his disbelief that he could have missed such a small, pretty, and strong girl like Fran.

The three other men who seemed to be Alibont’s party members nodded their heads.

The beastfolk who formed their own separate party reacted the same way.

“I registered yesterday.”

“What?”

“No way! Then what’s your rank?”

“G.”

“What? You’re only a G rank despite being this strong? That’s completely ridiculous!”

“No, rank and strength aren’t necessarily perfectly linked. There’s an elf who lived in a forest for a long time, entered human society, and became a G rank adventurer despite having the skill of a D rank one.”

“I-I see.”

“Makes sense.”

“In any case, Fran-san seems to have pulled one us!”

Ahh, so they ended up with that explanation.

They concluded that Fran must be a member of a long-lived race that grows slowly, meaning Fran actually had decades of years of experience.

[They seem to have convinced themselves of something, so how about we don't correct them? They think that because you look so young, you must be older than you look.]

‘I don't really care.’

To a refreshing degree, Fran didn't care what others thought of her. That's too bad. I wanted to seem even more surprised.

Well, it'd be a pain to explain everything, so I should just let this go.

“A-Anyway, we can't handle a goblin den with a Queen by ourselves. Let's go back to the guild for now!”

“That's right. Sorry, but would it be okay if you came with us, Fran-san?”

“Okay.”

“Thanks. Time is of the essence so let's go now.”

“Nice!”

Name: Fran Age: 12 years old

Race: Beastfolk. Black Cat

Job: Spellsword

Lv: 12

HP: 113 MP: 66 Strength: 89 Agility: 91

Titles: Dismantling Master, Healing Arts User, Skill Collector, Flame Arts User, Cooking Master, <NEW> Veteran of Insurmountable Odds, Goblin Killer, Patron of Slaughter

This was Fran's status. Her stats went up by a lot. And she also gained three titles!

Veteran of Insurmountable Odds: A title granted to those who have faced over a hundred enemies in a single battle by themselves.

Effects: HP up by 40, Strength up by 20. The skill Indomitable Spirit gained.

Goblin Killer: A title granted to those who have slain over a hundred goblins in a single battle.

Effects: Skill Goblin Killer gained.

Patron of Slaughter: A title granted to those who have slain over a hundred living beings by themselves.

Effects: Agility up by 10. The skill Calm Mind gained.

Skills

Indomitable Spirit: Immune to the effects of fear in times of stress, Recovery Speed Boost [large] added.

Goblin Killer: Deal increased damage to goblins.

Calm Mind: Relieves mental impairment caused by insanity. After this, calms the mind of the user.

These titles looked awesome. I wanted them too. But maybe it was because I was a sword that I couldn't get titles.

That aside, Indomitable Spirit was impressive. It was difficult to obtain, and I thought

to myself that its effects seemed to be a little cheat-like.

And I noticed something important.

I only just now found out that any skills Fran gains on her own weren't added to me as well.

Since I wouldn't have to add any skills that both of us had to Set Skills, this would allow us to have more options.

I told Fran about her status while we were walking to the city with the adventurers.

'Veteran of Insurmountable Odds? That's incredibly rare!'

[Really?]

'It's a hero's title!'

Fran was ecstatic. She was just that happy.

"Hey, young lady. Are you not going to form a party?"

"Party?"

"Yeah. If you haven't entered a party yet, then how about you join ours?"

Surprisingly, Alibont invited us into his party. It looked like he was serious.

"Wait. We were thinking about that too."

"Taking the initiative like that is quite troubling. Any party would want an outstanding adventurer like her."

The two other parties seemed to be having the exact same thoughts.

I was glad to hear Fran was so recognized for her strength.

[So, what do you think? Do you want to join one?]

'I only need Master in my party.'

[You can also keep me hidden and join a party.]

'It's fine. I have Master, after all.'

[Is that so?]

Well, I couldn't exactly show off my abilities, so making a party with me would be difficult.

For now.

After our battle with the goblin mob, we quickly returned to Alessa.

I wanted to go to have Fran's armor repaired, but we were forced to go to the guild first.

I used purification magic to clean some of the filth off Fran, but it didn't have much of an effect.

Though no one at the guild seemed to mind.

"Alibont-san, what is the matter?"

"Ah. There's something we have to report to the Guild Master."

"Please wait here. I will make sure he is ready for guests."

She seemed to have noticed from Alivont's serious face the gravity of the situation.

Nel-san hurriedly walked farther inside the guild.

A few minutes later, Nel-san came to bring us inside.

"The Guild Master has called for you all. Please come this way."

Inside the Guild Master's office were the Guild Master and Dunadron.

“Please give us your report.”

“Ahh. Krall’s party was heading to the site, and along the way they met Fran.”

“We were already done fighting.”

“I see. I would like to hear what happened next from Fran-san...”

The Guild Master gave a soft sigh. Likely because he knew Fran wasn’t the talkative type.

He looked worried about what exactly to ask Fran. Well, things were pretty serious, so I should give him a hand.

“Will you please report what happened?”

[Fran, take out the horns]

“Un. Here.”

Fran acted like she was taking something out of her pocket and took out a hobgoblin’s horn from Dimensional Storage.

“Is this...a hobgoblin’s horn?”

The Guild Master’s became serious after he used Appraisal to find out what it was, and he took it from Fran.

“So, there were hobgoblins mixed among the bunch! And how many goblins were there total? And how many hobgoblins?”

Dunadron was also shocked as he held a horn in his hand

“There were a lot.”

“Hmm, give us a bit more detail.”

[About 130 of them.]

“About 130.”

[Four hobgoblins, and about twenty high ranks.]

“Four hobgoblins, twenty high ranks.”

Dunadron got up without realizing it.

“That means there’s going to be a goblin stampede!”

“Please keep calm, Dunadron-kun.”

“M-My apologies.”

“Then, Fran-san, I have a question for you. What did you do about the goblins? Did you retreat?”

“I beat them all.”

“I see. And you didn’t retreat.”

“Un. I didn’t stop until I got them all.”

“That is unfortunate news.”

What could be wrong?

Based on what the Guild Master said, it seemed like that mob of goblins were forced out of their den because their numbers were too high.

As they continued to spawn, the Goblin King ordered the extra goblins out of the den.

They were probably prepared to die to stop Fran because they saw her as a threat to their den.

And he said that because there were hobgoblins and high rank goblins mixed in, it was safe to say that the den was already defended by nothing but hobgoblins.

“The size of the goblin stampede will likely be quite large,” said Dunadron.

“We should have an emergency meeting with all the adventurers,” said the Guild Master.

“We will prepare today and tomorrow for the annihilation of their den. Is that our plan?”

“Yes, please have the thief-type adventurers find the location of the den. I will create a special request.”

Things were chaotic.

The Guild Master called in Nel-san and other receptionists and gave them a variety of instructions.

“However, Alibont-san. May I ask you to go out once more?”

“Would you like me to lead them to the site?”

“Yes. If you could, please take the thief-type adventurers there and come back with them.”

“Understood. On this vital occasion. I will do my best.”

After Alibont said that, the other adventurers nodded their heads enthusiastically.

It looked like they wanted Fran to come along too, but that was a no go.

She needed to have her armor repaired, so I should have her rest for today. I couldn’t yield on this.

“Fran-san...please rest for today. I cannot ask you to strain your armor even more.”

“...Un.”

Fran nodded her head, almost angrily. Good job, Guild Master!

Alibont and the others seemed to want more detailed plans.

“I’ll go now.”

“Ahh, please wait. Before you leave, please go to the reception desk. We have completed the process to increase your rank to F.”

“I haven’t finished five requests yet.”

“We could not possibly leave an adventurer who has annihilated such a large number of goblins as a G rank adventurer. Also, because if you were not a G rank adventurer, you would not be able to participate in this request. This is partly for our own convenience as well.”

“Kuhahaha. The more strong adventurers we have, the better,” said Dunadron.

“Because we have just created this request, we still have no idea as to how many adventurers will show up. People like yourself who we know will be a strong asset are important,” said the Guild Master.

“There’ll be a request to participate in the extermination, so make sure to check that.”

“Un. I will for sure.”

“Thank you very much.”

“I’ll go then.”

As the Guild Master said, the receptionist did the procedures for the rank up.

It all went through without a problem. And it only took a few minutes.

All that happened was the letter F was engraved on the guild card.

“It went up!”

Fran looked happy. She may not have looked very different to others, but it was clear to me by the way she looked at the card that she cared about her rank. And her level.

Well, they also acted as gauges for her strength so it made sense.

[Great. The fighting's over so let's go get our armor repaired. But do you think we have enough money?]

“I want to sell weapons.”

[Can we sell them at the guild?]

We asked the receptionist, but she said that the guild only purchases materials and other loot.

[Then how about we take them to Old Man Garth's shop?]

The problem was if Old Man Garth would accept such shoddy weaponry.

[No, wait. There's another merchant we know!]

“Un?”

[Don't you remember? Well, he didn't leave much of an impression. I'm talking about Randel.]

“Ahh.”

Don't react as if you're saying, “Oh yeah, that guy exists, too.” Well, I was in no position to complain, though.

[He said he's at the far west side.]

“I'll find him.”

I was worried if we'd be able to find Randel when Alessa is so huge, but we found his shop right away.

Because Randel was standing outside his shop that was near the western entrance.

“Oh, Fran-san! Were you looking for my shop?”

“Un. To sell stuff.”

“I’m glad to hear that! C’mon, c’mon. Come inside.”

Randel led us inside his shop.

[How should I put it. It’s really messy.]

The store’s wares were packed together and displayed inside that cramped shop.

There was no organization as honey was displayed next to poisons, and general goods were next to weapons.

“It’s dirty.”

[Oh no. She really doesn’t beat around the bush!]

I looked at Randel and he was laughing bitterly.

“Haha. I hear that a lot. Because I put all the items that sell well on display.”

But even so, isn’t there too much variety? This wasn’t for me to say, but the average person would have trouble shopping here.

“This, buy it.”

“Wow. So, you have an Item Pocket!”

“For now.”

Randel took a small step back as weapons continued to come out.

“That aside, there’s...a lot.”

“I have more.”

“What? Wait. Sorry, but could you put them on the floor?”

“Okay.”

"That Item Pocket must be super high quality if it could fit this much stuff. I'm jealous. Mine's hard to use since it's so small."

He was acting like a pro as he Appraised the weapons even while making such chit-chat. He was keenly eyeing the items with a merchant-like face.

"Hmm, they aren't in very good condition."

"Goblins dropped them."

"Ahh, so that's where they're from. The good news is that there are a few steel weapons, but...altogether, it looks to be about 13,000 gil?"

'Is that okay?'

[So on average, one's about 200 gil...considering their condition, I guess it's okay?]

"Okay. That much is fine."

"Then come this way."

"Un."

Fran put all the money we got into Dimensional Storage.

"Thanks. I'll come again."

There were lots of interesting items he had on sale so we may end up coming here again. We should buy something when that time comes.

Since we made some money, we headed off for Old Man Garth's shop.

We hurried to the plaza that the old man's shop was in.

"There're lots of merchants."

In the plaza were many merchants as usual. Do the other shop owners not get mad at them for the hustle and bustle from those merchants?

We used the same backdoor we used yesterday and entered the shop.

[Hello.]

“Ohh, it’s you two! Why’d you come by? Your scabbard isn’t done yet, though.”

“Un, we’re here for something different today.”

[We were hoping you could fix Fran’s armor...]

And the first thing Garth said after getting after turning around was, “Wha-What the heck happened to you?!”

“Hey now. How’d you end up like that in just a day... What in the world happened?”

“We fought goblins.”

“Goblins?”

[Specifically, a goblin horde. More than a hundred.]

“There were hobgoblins, too.”

“What? That’s incredibly important! There’ll be a stampede soon!”

[We already reported this to the Adventurer’s Guild.]

“I see. But from the look of you, you were lucky to make it out alive.”

“Thanks to Master”

“Master?”

[That’s my name.]

Come to think of it, I might have forgotten to tell Garth my name. But I had a bad feeling.

“What? Why do you have such a weird——.”

[Isn't it a great name?! Fran thought of it! Don't you think so too, Garth?]

Hurry up and notice, Garth!

"Ah, ah. What a good name. For real."

[Right? You think so too, right?]

"The best name! A name befitting a fine sword!"

Phew. That was close. Garth seemed to have noticed what I was hinting at because he glanced at Fran and complimented my name to an unnatural degree.

"S-So you came here to have your armor repaired?"

[That's right! Can you fix it? We have to go suppress the goblins the day after tomorrow.]

"That's no problem. I can complete any repairs right away."

"How much will it cost?"

It seemed like Fran didn't notice. Thank goodness.

"Let's see...about 10,000 gil."

[That's very low.]

"Well, it's only the fee for the mana shard."

[Mana shard?]

"It's a kind of crystal distinct from magic crystals that's mined from the ground. We can store mana in it and use it as a catalyst for the procedure.

[This is my first time hearing about that.]

"I can use the smithing magic, Repair, and to use it, I need a mana shard as a catalyst."

[And you can fix the armor by using that spell?]

“Yeah. Would you like to watch?”

[Is that okay?]

And so, we ended up observing Old Man Garth repair Fran's armor.

The old man put the armor on his worktable. There was a magic circle drawn on the table. And he put a yellow mana shard on something that looked like a stand.

The rest was no different from the old man using a slightly long spell.

“——Repair!”

The mana shard shined as if in response to Garth's powerful voice.

And after the light dimmed, the armor lay there without a dent or scratch.

“Amazing.”

[Yeah. It looks brand new.]

“It's not that convenient a spell. The efficiency of the spell drops the more you use it on the same piece of armor. A small mana shard was enough this time, but it'll need a bigger one next time. And it'll cost about 30,000 gil.”

Then does that mean it might be cheaper to buy new armor?

I'll need to see how much money we have when that time comes.

“Thanks.”

“It was nothing much. After all, you'd be in some trouble if you weren't at peak condition when you're fighting hobgoblins!”

“Leave it to us.”

[We'll take down the King and Queen, too!]

“Un. They’re our prey.”

“Hahahaha. You two sure are reliable!”

The night after we annihilated the goblin horde.

I was in the inn.

[The moon sure is beautiful.]

There was a huge silver half-moon waning in the sky and following it were two small moons.

The huge silver moon was beginning to wane, but the same wasn’t true for the other six moons. Instead, the number of small moons grew then decreased. The number would increase by one every night until there were six in the sky. Then the next day, the cycle would start over, starting with zero.

I never got bored of these fantastical moons no matter how many times I saw them.

[Dang, if I don’t pay attention, then I’ll just keep staring at them. I guess I should check my new skills.]

Fran was in the bath. While she was there, I got bored so I thought about managing my time by checking my skills. After all, I need to spend my time efficiently.

I’m only saying this because I mentioned the bath, but I was really surprised when I found out that Fran liked taking baths. Because isn’t she also a cat?

I even thoughtlessly asked her [A-Aren’t you a cat?]

It seemed like cats’ aversion to water wasn’t normal in this world.

Fran had never seen a cat in the first place. Even though she’s part of the Black Cat clan.

She said that cats are rare, so the noblemen raised them. It seemed like those cats lived

much better lives than the Black Cats that were sought after as slaves by slave merchants.

Also, we moved from the inn we stayed at yesterday to a better inn that the guild recommended.

It was expensive at 600 gil a night, but there was also a huge bath and the food was apparently both plentiful and tasty.

Now, instead of that, this is what the skills I got from the goblins were like:

Quick Casting, Acrobatics, Kicking Techniques, Kicking, Necromancy, Poison Absorption, Poison Magic, Axe Techniques, Unrelenting Spirit, Cool Judgement.

Unfortunately, I couldn't use Kicking Techniques, Kicking, or Axe Techniques, so I decided to ignore them. It seemed like Cool Judgement had a calming effect during combat, so I couldn't test it here.

Yeah...I should try out Acrobatics first. It said that when used, the skill added a bonus to jumping and balance. I flew around inside the room, but I couldn't feel much of an effect. Darn.

But I thought that this skill was perfect for Fran.

Then I should check the magic next.

First was Poison Magic.

I guess the spells I could use at level 1 were Poison Arrow and Poison Create.

Hmm, at level 1, I could only create weak poisons. It seemed like it'd be completely useless against a strong opponent. And against a normal person, it would only be enough to afflict diarrhea or something else weak.

I sucked up the poison I made using Poison Create with Poison Absorption, but I still wasn't sure. It said I could use the skill to restore HP, but I didn't have any HP to begin with, so I had no idea about its effects.

Maybe I can use it act as an air purifier if there's a poison mist or something.

I also tested Quick Casting. I hardly felt any effect at level 1, but maybe it was shorter by one second? In serious combat, this could have a huge impact. And I also had the feeling that the skill's effect would become that much more amazing if I leveled it up.

And the only one left was the important skill, Necromancy.

[It seems like a magic that'll have lots of uses.]

The necromancy skill was level 1, so I could use two spells: Create Lesser Zombie and Search Undead.

I took out a goblin corpse.

I was right to use create a seal of purification magic on the ground to stop its blood from dripping onto the floor.

[——Create Lesser Zombie!]

“Aaaugh.”

[Wooow...]

I may have made it myself, but it was disgusting!

Did it become even more disgusting than when it was just a corpse? Thank goodness I don't have a nose. I could absolutely empathize with Krillin. (*tn: a somewhat rare original Dragon Ball reference. Krillin's lack of a nose was used to his advantage in a fight against an extremely smelly man*)

[Stay there.]

“Aaaugh.”

[So it listens to my commands.]

The zombie stood still. Though it was still wobbling.

Then I used Search Undead.

I could sense the zombie just like when I used Sense Traces.

Okay, I used them both, but...

What do I do about the zombie?

Ah, I wonder how it shows up on Summoned Familiars? Wow, a Lesser Goblin Zombie showed up. Am I not able to get rid of it?

[...Sorry.]

“Ah——.”

With a single word as an apology, I struck down the zombie. I had no idea of knowing if this zombie was the same as the ones that show up in dungeons, but there was no magic crystal.

I dissolved the now motionless zombie by using Undead Return, a purification magic spell. The zombie disappeared from my Summoned Familiars.

[Hm, find peace.]

I should take more care the next time I use necromancy.

I won't let your death be in vain, goblin zombie! Though you were already dead.

[...I should calm down and move on to what's next.]

I checked the magical items I took from the goblins.

[There's seven. Let's see; what're their effects?]

There were two weapons. A steel knife and hammer. They were both enchanted with slightly increased attack power.

Fran could probably use the knife to skin pelts. Meanwhile, the hammer is probably going to stay inside Dimensional Storage.

Next was one accessory. An item with a small effect, increasing strength but decreasing mana.

[Strength Boost 5, MP Decrease 8...well, I guess someone who only uses physical strength would use it.]

We didn't need it since Fran used magic.

If equivalent exchange existed in this place, then we still have time to find something better.

There were three pieces of armor: steel armor with rust resistance, leather armor with size alteration, and a mystical tree helmet with impact resistance.

Their base defense values were low so they seemed useless. The armor we bought from Old Man Garth was definitely a lot better.

The last thing left was an Item Pocket. But I couldn't make it work.

[Does it already have a user registered?]

Maybe it was like how I registered a wielder. It seemed like nobody except the registered user could use it; otherwise, it was nothing more than a normal pouch.

I looked inside and saw there were rocks for throwing, berries, and other small things. It seemed like the goblin who used it only stored trivial things.

[What if I used contract magic to overwrite the registered user?]

I should test it out.

[——Contract!]

It was no use. But rather than being completely meaningless, I felt a stronger contract repel my attempt. It seemed like overwriting the user was possible. Even skill level 7 was probably too low.

[Hmm, I want to increase the skill level so I can open up any Item Pockets I find.]

But that was a thought for later.

[How much money do we have left...]

Today we got 109 pairs of goblin horns. And 20 pairs from high rank goblins. A pair of horns from a high rank goblin costs 100 gil.

And we got 100 gil for completing the herb collection request.

I gave Fran 10,000 gil, so I currently had 37,000 gil.

[Should I buy mana potions for the day after tomorrow? Then I can't spend the money thoughtlessly.]

Isn't this not enough money in the first place?

[That's right, I collected some mysterious loot as well.]

I should classify them as well.

Ten poisonous plants, ten shining mushrooms, ten paralysis-healing grass, ten deadly poisonous grass, and ten heal grass. There were requests that asked for five of each type of plant, so we collected ten of each one to complete as many of those requests as possible. But because we unexpectedly became F rank adventurers, G rank requests could no longer help us rank up.

The only F rank request we could complete was the one asking for deadly poisonous grass, so to increase Fran's rank once more, we needed to complete about eighteen more.

Apparently, many places in dungeons have limited access based on rank, so I wanted to increase Fran's adventurer rank a bit more.

And I had about thirty other mysterious poisonous materials. Actually, because I had Appraisal, I could tell the materials' names and the fact that they're poisonous. But they weren't the quest targets, so I couldn't even tell if they had any uses. That was why I called them mysterious.

[Maybe we should take them to Randel's shop.]

I also wanted to gather more information on the hobgoblins before the raid, so tomorrow will probably be very busy.

CHAPTER 4

FIRST DUNGEON

The day of the raid on the hobgoblins.

We went to Old Man Garth's forge.

Because the scabbard we wanted was ready.

"Yo, sorry for the wait. Here it is."

[Whoa, so this is my scabbard!]

Old Man Garth handed us a chic scabbard made of dyed black leather.

It was plain, but the stitching was excellently done so it didn't look shabby.

"Here, Master."

[Yeah. Then here I go...]

I quickly flew into the scabbard that Fran was holding at eye level.

Shwoop.

[Whoa...]

It really calmed me down.

It was the same feeling as when I went into the pedestal.

Though I may have felt comfortable in the pedestal because it was similar to a scabbard.

[Ahh...]

I let out an entirely pleased sound as if I had just entered a warm bath.

But it really did feel good.

I never imagined a sword would have the desire to be inside a scabbard.

And maybe it was because of Old Man Garth's excellent craftsmanship, but my body fit perfectly inside. It was like being wrapped in blankets and added to my sense of tranquility.

I wanted to stay inside the scabbard. That was how much it calmed me.

[Old Man Garth. This is the best. Absolutely amazing.]

“Kuhaha. I’m glad to hear you like it.”

“Master, you look happy.”

[Yeah. It’s a good scabbard.]

Garth laughed like a mischievous kid and put his hand on the scabbard.

“Since I would’ve gotten bored of making just a normal scabbard, I installed a small function to it.”

[What? Are you serious, Lon Berk?!] (*tn: Intensely obscure reference to Dragon Quest: Dai’s Great Adventure*)

“Lon Berk? Who’s that?”

[Sorry, I was too excited.]

He installed something on the scabbard? It didn’t seem like the scabbard had anything like that.

“You see the metal fixture right there?”

“I do.”

"If you take it off, then——."

Click.

"The scabbard split open."

"That's right. That way it's easy to get out of the scabbard using Telekinesis even without the little lady's help."



[Oho, this is nice. And it's easy to put the scabbard back to normal.]

By pressing the sides together with Telekinesis and putting the metal fixture back to normal, the scabbard could immediately turn back to its original form.

“It’s convenient.”

“Right?! It was tough to make it strong as well.”

Even though he’s a blacksmith, he was able to make the highest quality leather goods as well. He really is a master blacksmith.

[I thank you very much and kindly accept it.]

“Yeah. Do your best. If you find any good materials, bring them here! Well, the dungeon only popped up a bit ago so I don’t expect much.”

“Dungeons can form all of a sudden?”

“Yeah, that’s right. You didn’t know?”

Fran tilted her head to the side. I also had no idea how dungeons formed.

“The God of Chaos creates them sometimes as a trial for humanity.”

[I didn’t know.]

“God of Chaos? Different from a death god?”

“So you don’t know that, either. Here, I’ll explain.”

After saying that, Old Man Garth started by telling us a myth.

“Simply put, this world was created by 88 gods. Among them, there were 10 particularly powerful ones.”

First, the God of the Sun, the God of the Moon, the God of the Sea, the God of the Earth, the God of Fire, the God of Weather, the God of Forests, and the God of Beasts created the world.

Then, the God of the Netherworld established the cycle of birth and rebirth, the natural order of the world.

The 78 children gods expanded the world their parent gods created by bringing a large variety of beings.

“Children gods?”

“Yeah. The more well known among them are the God of the Forge, the God of the Sword, the God of Darkness, the God of Cooking, and more.”

And last of all, as its name suggests, the God of Chaos spread chaos about the world.

But according to Old Man Garth, that chaos was a trial necessary to keep the world from stagnating.

We understood that very well. That it's only by overcoming adversity that we can experience the greatest growth.

Just like how Fran grew after fighting the goblins.

Could the God of Chaos be one of the Buddhist gods? Well, I couldn't imagine that being the case based on its name.

“And the Death God?”

“The Death God was originally the God of War. But drunk off its strength, it tried to take over the rest of the world until the other gods waged war against it and defeated it. They say that its grudge was so powerful that the scattered pieces of its corpse accumulated curses, and that the Death God was born from there.”

“I see.”

“Dungeons are seen as one of the trials created by the God of Chaos. Within them are Dungeon Masters, the descendants of the God of Chaos, and apparently they strive to spread chaos.”

Dungeon Masters, huh. So beings like them exist as well. I wonder if they have magic

crystals.

There's a high possibility that they have all kinds of skills as well.

"This is still being researched, but apparently when a Dungeon first shows up, a Core forms as well. And that when that Core forms, the living being closest to it is devoured and then turned into the Dungeon Master."

"It seems like some of them will be weak and some will be strong."

"That's right. A Dungeon's level of difficulty varies widely depending on the Dungeon Master. If an unintelligent animal becomes the Dungeon Master, then the Dungeon will be easy to take care of."

"Are there any super strong Dungeon Masters?"

"Like dragons, orcs, or cockatrices. As long as there's some kind of living being, it can possibly become a Dungeon Master"

"Even people?"

"Of course. In the past, several human-race Dungeon Masters were confirmed."

So people can become masters of a Dungeon. That sounds like a pain.

"In truth, even if people call them a god's trial, it's more an annoyance than anything."

People could die, so that was no surprise. There were probably few people like us who wanted to fight.

"Mind, Dungeons also have some rare demonic beasts, so they've become sources of livelihood for adventurers."

Is he saying that Dungeons aren't only bad? There must be some people who struck it rich in those Dungeons, so the Dungeons must be no different than islands with buried treasure for adventurers.

"There're also treasure chests that have strong weapons or magical items inside them."

There must be unimaginably amazing magical tools in them. I'm starting to get pumped for some reason!

"But there're cases when wars have been fought over incredibly powerful Dungeon items, and cases when those items steal customers from blacksmiths."

So you're just complaining!

"But still, there's not too much to worry about on the item front for this Dungeon. Because the items' abilities correlate with how long a Dungeon's existed."

"Un."

But we really spent a lot of time here.

We quickly headed to the Adventurer's Guild. Because after we received explanations on several points of the raid, we decided to go to the goblins' den.

"Hi, Nel."

"Oh my, Fran. Hi!"

Fran spoke to the receptionist, and Nel-san smiled happily and responded in kind.

Hey, when'd you two get so close? I asked Fran, and she said that we all stayed in the same inn. It seems they entered the baths together and hit it off together. I could easily see Nel-san chattering away and Fran wordlessly agreeing with her. Well, since Fran isn't much of a people person, I was glad to see her get to know others.

"Fran, good luck."

"Un. Leave it to me."

"Be careful to not get hurt. Dunadron-dan may be there, but there are no other high rank adventurers so there are many low rank adventurers that would normally not go."

"High rank adventurers?"

"Yes. The majority of adventurers from ranks C to rank A are investigating the Demon Wolf's Plain. Normally, leaving this to them would be no issue...especially the A rank adventurers. They're on a wholly different level. If need be, she alone could have taken care of this."

"Her? a woman?"

"That's right. Amanda, an A rank adventurer. She's the Alessa Guild's ace."

That was interesting. It was impressive enough to just be an A rank adventurer, but she's even a woman. I wanted to meet her.

"Also, we asked the Knight's Order for reinforcements, but they ignored us."

"Ignored?"

"That's right. Ignored!"

"Even though they're the Knight's Order?"

"I can't understand what they even exist for!"

It seemed my image of great moral integrity I had of the Knight's Order was wrong.

"And their vice-captain is the worst. He's a son-of-a-bitch nobleman. He's violent and petty and a complete ass so it's like he only has the worst traits of any noble. I'm pretty sure he hates adventurers. It wouldn't surprise me if he didn't even tell the Grand Master of what's happening here."

It seemed like Nel-san had a lot of pent-up anger because of him. With an angry expression on her face, she continued to lay down resentful remarks about him. But maybe she realized Fran was in front of her, because Nel-san smiled drily.

"Oh, ohohohoho. Oh dear, I was rambling. Could you please forget what I said?"

"Un. Okay."

"Thanks. But Fran, be cautious of him as well. You won't have to deal with him during

today's raid, but that might not stay the same for later events."

"Un."

As Fran chatted with Nel-san, the number of adventurers slowly grew.

[There're a lot of adventurers.]

There were likely over fifty adventurers inside the guild.

This was my first time seeing so many adventurers together in one place.

"But they aren't that strong."

[I guess Dunadron is the strongest.]

Dunadron was only rank C, but apparently, he was well known for being a training instructor for beginners.

Besides him, there were a few C rank adventurers, but Dunadron was acting as the leader and nobody objected.

"Hey, why's there a kid here?!"

But it seemed they did have objections to make about Fran. Well, Fran was inevitably going to stick out as a little girl surrounded by lots of tense adventurers. Some of them were likely to get mad since this was no place for kids.

"What're you planning on doing with that sword of yours?"

I wanted to retort, "You're a kid, too!" because he looked like a slim little boy. His armor was still clean, and he gave off the sense that he was a beginner.

They said G rank adventurers couldn't participate so everyone should be F rank or higher...

It didn't look like he could beat even a goblin.

Stats-wise, he was a little stronger than a goblin, but the difference really was minimal.

He likely ranked up because of domestic requests like delivering packages and moving furniture rather than anything involving combat.

His Skill, Sword Wielding 1, was by far the weakest Skill I'd seen so far among the adventurers.

There really must be a shortage of people if they're even calling for people like him.

"I'm going to exterminate the goblins."

"This is a fight vital for the safety of Alessa. A kid like you will just get in the way! Only F rank and greater adventurers can take part in this, anyway. Go home, kid!"

He was making a seriously unhappy face.

But Fran was spacing out, ignoring the boy in her "my pace" style.

"Hey. Are you listening?"

"Un?"

"Tch. Hey, look here. This isn't some playground for little kids. If you want to play adventurer, then do it somewhere else."

I had to worry about what would happen if this boy had to face a hobgoblin mob. Because those hobgoblins will definitely be way stronger than him.

So he was likely picking on someone who looks weaker than him to hide the fact that that he was nervous.

The nearby adventurers reacted in a variety of ways.

Some of them looked entertained, some of them didn't care and just ignored them, and some of them thought the boy was being a bother as well.

The latter-most reaction made sense considering the two of them looked like noisy children who didn't belong in this place.

“Un.”

“Shit, stop moving around!”

The boy shouted in frustration as Fran continued to dodge his attempts to grab her.

They might get yelled at, so maybe I should tell her to stop. None of the other adventurers, however, had any intention of interrupting them directly.

No, a few of them got angry and yelled at them to stop, but the other adventurers stopped any dissenters.

“Hey, stop it!”

“But why?”

“She’s that girl, the one who’s rumored to have——.”

“For real?!”

It looked like news of the incident ending in over a hundred goblins dead had spread among the adventurers.

But some of them didn’t realize the importance of that information and didn’t pay attention to what the others were saying.

Besides that boy, there was an adventurer who shouted commandingly at them.

“Hey, you shitty brats! Quit making so much noise! You’re being a bother so get out! We have enough supplies carriers!”

“I-I’m not a supplies carrier! I’m a full-fledged F rank adventurer!”

“New F rank adventurers are no better than G rank adventurers!”

“But I’m still an F rank. I have the right to participate!”

“I’m also an F rank.”

“What’d you say?”

The young man was surprised and looked down at Fran.

He probably didn’t think she was a legitimate adventurer.

“Hahahahahaha. You mean you two are F ranks? If two small-fry brats like you are F ranks, then I’m an S rank!”

“Wait, wait. You mean those two really F ranks? It must be super easy for adventurers to rank up.”

“Well, they’re only excavators, anyway.”

I could tell they were talking smack about adventurers, but was it a bad thing to be an excavator?

Did it have the same meaning as calling all mercenaries hyenas?

“I joined because I thought there’d be lots of work, but it looks like it won’t be hard to become a high ranker!”

Were they those aforementioned mercenaries?

Based on what I heard before, there was a war in the neighboring country, but it ended sooner than anyone expected so there were lots of mercenaries looking for work.

I looked at their statuses, but they weren’t anything special.

How could they act so big-headed when they’re only this strong?

“Hehehe. You got something nice there.”

“Huh? That’s a damn fine-looking sword.”

“Hand it over.”

They’re smarter than I thought, realizing what a good sword I am.

Though it was a mistake to extend a hand to try and take me.

Because his awareness of danger was abysmally low.

The boy who was picking a fight with Fran must have felt intimidated because he backed off with a scared look on his face. That was a smart response.

Because he sensed the bloodthirst exuding from Fran.

On the other hand, the good-for-nothing mercenary continued to reach for the sword with a vulgar expression on his face.

“Mm——.”

“You all, stop right there!”

This was right before Fran made her move. Dunadrond stood between Fran and the mercenaries.

And he gave them a good talking to.

“You idiots! Don’t start a ruckus right before we leave!”

“No, but we didn’t...”

They were cowed by Dunadrond’s presence. Their faces were grim.

“I saw everything, so don’t give excuses. Just focus on exterminating the goblins! Do that, and I’ll ignore what just happened.”

Fran lost all interest after that, erased her bloodthirst, and moved away.

I told her that it was best to go somewhere less conspicuous.

Behind us, the adventurer boy grumbled to Fran

“Hey, you, are you not even going to greet Instructor Dunadrond after he saved you?!”

“Kuhahaha, of course she’s not. Fran wasn’t the one I saved!”

“Huh?”

“For real. We can’t have her tiring herself out before we leave.”

“What?”

Dunadrond, just how dangerous do you think Fran is?

Even Fran wouldn’t let herself get tired right before an important operation like this. Probably.

And no matter how much she exerts herself, we could always restore her with healing magic.

[There might end up being an aftereffect though.]

“Un?”

[It’s nothing. Let’s do our best on the goblin raid.]

“Un. Of course.”

After that, Dunadrond had all the adventurers line up.

No, it was more like he had them all bunch up together.

It looked like he was getting ready to explain how they were going to attack the den.

He started by telling people what roles they’d play and other information about the raid.

Next, he gave us information on the Dungeon itself.

“For a lot of you, this’ll probably your first time in a Dungeon. I’ll be explaining the basics of Dungeons! For those of you who already know this stuff, listen and think of it as review.”

We had never been to a Dungeon before, but the same was true for many of the low rank adventurers here.

The majority seemed to have no experience with Dungeons.

It was a blessing that we were able to learn about Dungeons.

Well, in summary, he said not to destroy the Dungeon Core so that the Dungeon can still be used.

The nucleus of a Dungeon is its Core. Destroy the Core, and the Dungeon dies. He said that any living monsters in the Dungeon die off if the Dungeon Master dies. But the Core won't be destroyed by any normal attacks because it's protected by a highly dense covering.

The being connected to the Dungeon Core is the Dungeon Master. If the Master dies, then the Core will enter a dormant state and halt all functions. And when the Dungeon Core is destroyed, all the demonic beasts die off as well.

Though the Core is still the nucleus of a Dungeon even in a dormant state, a dormant Core, if imbued with enough mana, can be used by a human to control a Dungeon to a limited extent. This control was limited only to things that the Dungeon Master created when it was alive, but it was possible to spawn items or demonic beasts within a dungeon. We were told that because these Dungeons can bring in lots of wealth for the Adventurer's Guild, the guild's goal is to take down the Dungeon Master without destroying the Core, and then take control of the Dungeon.

"But right now, we're in crisis mode. In a worst-case scenario, we are permitted to destroy the Core. I hope you all don't forget that this raid is the most important mission."

Two hours after the adventurers jubilantly headed off for the Dungeon.

"It's the goblins!"

A person on watch shouted.

The adventurers were likely creating a base in front of the Dungeon using materials

they brought there.

The goblins showed up from out of the Dungeon's entrance.

Because we were out on patrol, we arrived late.

"Master, over there."

[They still haven't built a base yet. This is hectic.]

The adventurers and the hobgoblins were fighting in a massive crowd.

With them like that, we couldn't even use any area-of-effect fire magic.

The adventurers were backing up Dunadron with all they had.

"I'm going."

[Okay. But before we go into the Dungeon, we have to whittle down their numbers a bit. I won't be able to sleep at night if the adventurers are wiped out.]

"Master doesn't sleep."

[It's a figure of speech!]

Fran pulled me out of the sheath and ran at them.

We'll need to start by supporting the beginners who were thrown into the fray.

Fran continued to run and slashed randomly at a hobgoblin.

Well, because it was a surprise attack from behind, it was defeated in almost a single strike.

"It's weak."

[Because even if they are hobgoblins, they're weak individually.]

This was the status of the hobgoblin Fran just defeated.

Name: Hobgoblin Swordsman

Race: Demon

Lv: 8

HP: 69 MP: 28 Strength: 39 Agility: 25

Skills: Threaten 1, Dodging 1, Sword Techniques 1, Sword Wielding 3, Command 1, Speed 2, Collaborate 2, Energy Manipulation

Its stats were a little lower than those of the Goblin King that I fought before. But this one also had the Skill Collaborate so it'll be a pain if the whole group has that Skill.

The good-for-nothing mercenary who tried to start a fight with Fran was already defeated and motionless on the ground.

It looked like he was too eager for glory. I could tell even at a glance from his heavily stabbed body that his life was already over.

Fran didn't even spare him a glance. She might have even forgotten what he looked like.

“Hyah!”

[So you're aiming for the ones that have knives!]

As Fran continued to swing me around, I shot out Aura Blades to surreptitiously slay hobgoblins.

Every adventurer that Fran saved gave his or her thanks to Fran.

Though half of their voices sounded embarrassed.

“Th-Thanks!”

“Who'd have thought such a cute young lady is actually this strong.”

“Huh? Who are you?”

Oh, he's that boy from before.

"Th-There's no way!"

He was fighting well and without too much difficulty. He may have totally forgotten about fighting when he saw Fran, but a senpai saved him.

The C and D rank adventurers were frantically trying to block the cave entrance, so there were few strong adventurers near the base. Which is why the hobgoblins naturally noticed Fran who was taking such an active role in the battle.

"It's a big catch."

[It's because they keep coming from over there for you. The more that come for you, the more adventurers you save so it isn't that bad.]

I refrained from absorbing magic crystals here.

Because it'd be pain if someone found out that the hobgoblins Fran slayed didn't have magic crystals.

That was why, by inspecting them with Appraisal, I only absorbed the magic crystals of the hobgoblins that had Skills I really wanted. Nobody should notice that little.

[Don't you think they'll be okay now? Let's go to the Dungeon.]

"Un."

Once we're in the Dungeon, nobody could see me absorb magic crystals, and if I put the corpses in Dimensional Storage, any evidence of our actions would be gone.

Fran headed for the Dungeon.

A battle raged between the humans and the hobgoblins as they surged back and forth around the entrance.

"It's a cave type just like they said."

There are lots of varieties of Dungeons, like labyrinth types or cave types.

We were told that cave types are common among newly formed Dungeons, and though there are very few traps, the Dungeon's path branches out in a complicated pattern like an ant's nest.

We were also told that because magicians sent familiars to scout out the Dungeon, the inside was cleared of traps. Those traps would only have been a bother, though, since so many goblins walk through these passageways.

In addition, we were told that there were no Special Spaces.

Special Spaces are rooms with special effects like seals, healing blockers, magic absorption, and others, and walking into the wrong one could spell death for an adventurer. Maybe they were able to detect whether those Special Spaces were here or not, because they guaranteed that there were no Special Spaces.

This was good news for us. Because this meant we only had to worry about fighting.

[Let's go!]

"Un."

[Yahoo!]

Fran leapt into the sky for the cave entrance, passing over the wall that the adventurers were fortifying.

Dunadron was shocked as he saw Fran do this.

He was staring at Fran, his eyes wide open.

Hey, geezer, if Fran was wearing a skirt, you'd be convicted.

"Is that Aerial Jump? Even though only Sky Knights should have that Skill?!"

Huh? Was this a bad decision?

[Sky Knight? It sounds like an advanced high rank Job.]

I wonder how high up the job Sky Knight is. Sky also means heaven so it was almost certainly strong. We might have to refrain from using Aerial Jump in front of others based on his reaction.

“Master, what does that matter now?”

[Ugh...I guess you're right.]

Well, Fran had a point. Something like this was bound to happen again, so maybe hiding our Skills was pointless. Then maybe it was best to just use it without worrying.

“More importantly, goblins.”

[Shoot, you're right.]

“Master, please use magic. If it hits, I'll keep hitting them as well.

[Okay.]

Fran used Buoyancy to jump even higher.

Syncing with her movement, I cast Tri Explosion.

Booom!

The hobgoblins that were crowding around the entrance area were sent flying.

The spell was only enough to act as a diversion against Dunadron, but it was strong enough to be lethal against hobgoblins.

And after landing, Fran immediately struck them down one after another.

“Sonic Wave!”

The Sword Techniques 5 Skill, Sonic Wave. It shot a frontal shockwave, but it was a good technique for defeating the hobgoblins in one strike.

“This is our chance.”

Fran sprinted for the cave entrance that was now covered by much fewer goblins.

“Ah, wait! Only D rank adventurers and higher can enter the Dungeon!”

We knew that already.

That was why we rushed ahead of everyone else, so that no one would try and stop us.

Dunadron's group was still fighting with the hobgoblins.

“Shit! Follow the young lady!”

“That's right. I wouldn't be able to sleep at night if I left such a little girl to die.”

“Dumbass! That's not it!”

“Pardon?”

“If we let that young lady go on alone, she'll take all the good loot for herself!”

“You mean that little girl?”

“You saw her use Aerial Jump and magic! Ignore the young lady's appearance. I'm telling you to think of her as a master adventurer disguised as a child!”

After everything's mopped up, the guild takes inventory of all the loot, deducts part of it for the guild's use, and divides the remainder equally among the adventurers.

But the guild accepted that adventurers who gathered loot and put them into their Item Pockets had ownership of what they took.

In other words, their profits increased the more demonic beasts they took down. The adventurers were trying to further their own gains.

Though I thought that people would cut in line or there'd be fall outs among prior comrades. Like when we rushed into the Dungeon.

“Master.”

[This is...an experience point farm!]

The inside of the Dungeon was swarming with hobgoblins.

“I’ll leave it to you.”

[Yeah! Flare Blast!]

The Blaze Magic 1 spell, Flare Blast.

A spell that shout out intensely hot flames. Its area of effect wasn’t particularly large, but it was stronger than anything Fire Magic could make.

Sheeeew——ba-bang!

The flames pierced through the goblins and the explosion defeated the remaining ones.

In a cramped place like this cave, the spell’s power was immensely enhanced.

Fran charged at the goblin mob, rushing further into the fray.

[I used all our money to buy a Return Feather, so let’s go as far as we can!] (*tn: A Dark Souls reference.*)

“Hyaaaa!”

“Gugyagh!”

[Fire Javelin!]

I quickly fired a spray of spells, reducing the number of approaching hobgoblins. Fran also shot out magic and took care of the hobgoblins. I may be tooting my own horn, but we were making great combos.

I didn’t store all of the corpses.

If we didn't leave something for the people behind us, they might get more pissed off at us than is necessary. Plus, I didn't know what the limit of my storage is. I didn't want to suddenly be unable to store anything at an important moment.

But I did absorb all of the magic crystals of the corpses I put in storage.

I used Appraisal during combat to glance at the hobgoblins' statuses for useful Skills, and of the ones that did, I sliced through their magic crystals and placed their corpses in Storage.

If they didn't, we slashed at them in some other place and cast them aside.

As for the dark-skinned Evil Goblins that occasionally popped up in the mobs, we prioritized defeating them. Not because they had different Skills from the other hobgoblins, but because they gave almost two times as much to my Magic Crystal Points. Well, they were like bonus opponents.

Sorting through which ones to defeat required split-second judgment.

Now it was possible to dual cast spells.

I need to concentrate to cast a spell, and until now, even with the Skill Divided Thought, it was impossible to cast two separate spells simultaneously. It seemed like the only way to unlock the full potential of a difficult to use Skill was with training.

[Hahahaha, Fire Javelin!]

Nearly ten blazing spears shot towards the hobgoblin mob.

"Master, you're amazing."

[You'll be able to do this soon, Fran.]

"I get a bad headache."

It seemed like using Divided Thought too much results in a headache. Well, it was pretty obviously because it was a Skill that taxes the brain.

[I wouldn't know how that feels.]

I can't feel pain, so I naturally don't get headaches.

Divided Thought seemed like a Skill I had great synergy with.

And I also have the Magician Skill.

"I want to make casting low rank spells while I'm fighting my goal."

[My next goal is casting two different spells at the same time.]

"Good luck."

[Yeah. Leave it to me.]

Fortunately, there was no shortage of target practice in this place.

And Fran swept through the Dungeon without a problem.

I tried using Echolocation to get a lay of the land, but at level 1, it couldn't give a very detailed description.

That's why I used Skills like Sense Traces, Sense Vibrations, and Sense Heat to find the direction in which there were the most hobgoblins and head that way.

"Master, there're stairs."

[So there are two floors.]

We went down the stairs, but the first and second floors were barely any different. I guess the only difference was that there were way more hobgoblins?

That meant we could get more Skills, so I didn't mind.

"Lots of good target practice."

From there, Fran became even more impressive.

Fran might already see those hobgoblins as nothing more than experience points.

For some reason, the hobgoblins ran away the moment they saw Fran.

Maybe news of her spread? But Fran chased the retreating hobgoblins and slashed through their backs.

How far have we gone? I thought we had already walked more than enough to get through the entirety of the first floor.

[It opens up from here.]

"Un. And I can sense lots of them."

[Have we finally gotten to the Boss?]

We cautiously walked forwards to find a large space decorated like a main hall.

There were tiles placed on the ground so it was completely different from the cave. We slipped inside of the hall.

[There's a big one.]

In the middle of a crowd of nearly fifty hobgoblins were two conspicuously large monsters.

This reminded me of the Goblin King that I defeated in the Demon Wolf's Plain. Was it second nature for goblins to gather around the Boss when there's an intruder?

Both the King and Queen were important objectives for this raid. I really wanted to take them down.

The King and Queen were different from the other goblins. Their stats were strong and they had all kinds of Skills.

But that was all. They were about as strong as the demonic beasts that showed up in Area 3.

As long as we kept on our guard, we wouldn't lose.

[Let's go, Fran.]

“Un!”

[Let's start with a preemptive strike.]

Before they noticed we were there, we shot a spell.

[Flare Blast!]

“Flare Blast.”

[Once more, Flare Blast!]

We focused the magic at the same place to create a free passage straight to the King and Queen. And Fran ran between the confused hobgoblins.

[Let's take them out now!]

That's what I planned, but...

[Huh?]

“They're dead?”

We forced our way through the hobgoblin mob into the middle of the hall to find the burnt bodies of the King and Queen. The spells we shot as a diversion seemed to have hit them directly.

[Um, did we win?]

We looked around, but the hobgoblins were running away as fast they could.

It really did look like it was over.

[Does this mean we completed the request?]

But the cave's path continued ahead.

[Or maybe this isn't the end?]

"The path keeps going."

[Maybe the Dungeon Master is that way?]

It looked like neither the King nor the Queen we just killed were the Dungeon Master.

Because all the demonic beasts hadn't died off as Dunadron said.

"Let's go as far as we can."

[Yeah, let's go!]

After that, we progressed through the second floor.

And we found a door.

It was a suspiciously constructed door, a decorated door nearly three meters tall and made of steel.

"It's a big door."

[Maybe we've finally reached the door?]

The door was imposing and gave off a warning as if to repel any who thought of entering.

There's no way there was nothing in front of it.

[We need to get the Feather ready first.]

"Un."

Creeeak.

The door slowly and noisily opened as I pushed it with Telekinesis.

The door opened to a small open space.

Is there nothing inside?

No, I could sense a small demonic beast. Is it an insect type demonic beast?

[Don't lose focus.]

"I know."

Slaaam!

Whoa! The door suddenly closed.

Was it that thing? That standard trap where we can't leave until we slay the Boss?

[They said there were no traps.]

"We're trapped?"

[Fran, keep calm.]

"I'm okay. We just have to beat them all. Nothing's changed so it's all right."

What an amazing person.

Shu-shu-shu-shu-shuk.

"Un?"

[So they showed up.]

Insect type demonic beasts with blue shells climbed up into the room. They were horned ladybugs the size of a softball. Their belly parts creeped me out because they looked just like the gross belly of a pillbug.

Name: Army Beetle Leader

Race: Insect. Demonic Beast

Lv: 5

HP: 8 MP: 18 Strength: 4 Agility: 22

Skills: Wind Magic 1, Summon Bloodkin 5, Command 1, Connect 1, Acidic Fangs

Name: Army Beetle

Race: Insect. Demonic Beast

Lv: 2

HP: 6 MP: 5 Strength: 3 Agility: 20

Skills: Harden 1, Acidic Fangs

Name: Army Beetle Medic

Race: Insect. Demonic Beast

Lv: 4

HP: 10 MP: 10 Strength: 1 Agility: 20

Skills: Healing Magic 2, Acidic Fangs

Name: Army Beetle Shooter

Race: Insect. Demonic Beast

Lv: 4

HP: 3 MP: 11 Strength: 2 Agility: 20

Skills: Wind Magic 3, Acidic Fangs

They were small fries, but there were lots of them. Probably more than a hundred.

Also, the Leader had the Command Skill. If we didn't kill it right away, they'd swell up like a snowball.

"This looks fun."

It looked like Fran was steadily walking on the path to becoming a battle addict.

We began our gleeful fight against those creepy bugs.

I helped out by restricting the bugs' movements with Telekinesis.

If they were this small, I could stop them with only the most minimal use of Telekinesis. I normally used magic against larger demonic beasts because the mana cost was way smaller that way.

“Hup! Hyaa!”

I stopped them from moving and Fran cut them, only aiming for their magic crystals.

It looked like they were rare demonic beasts, so I stored about half of the loot.

The biggest pain was the Shooter's wind magic, but the spells were incredibly weak and they had so little mana that they stopped firing after only a few shots. They were only slight bothers and nothing more.

The Leaders summoned more of their subordinates, but they just made things better for us. They leveled up our wind magic, Harden, Summon Bloodkin, and Collaborate Skills along with increasing my Magic Crystal Points.

Thirty minutes later.

We sensed humans in front of the door.

“Shit! It won't open!”

Dunadron and his group seemed to have arrived.

[There's no helping it. Let's finish up.]

“Even though this is a bonus stage...”

[It's all right. I'm as disappointed as you.]

“Un...”

We commenced annihilating them.

We repeatedly use fire magic and large area-of-effect Sword Techniques.

It was over in an instant. In less than five seconds, we annihilated over 200 insects.

Without our noticing it, Wind Magic had gone up to level 7. This must be because we absorbed so many magic crystals.

Click.

[Huh? The door over there opened.]

The door Dunadron and his group were slamming at remained closed as usual.

And the door hidden on the opposite side opened.

“I can feel really strong mana.”

[This level of mana...is about a C rank demonic beast...no, it's above that.]

The demonic beast with the strongest mana I'd encountered until now was the Gluttony Slime Lord.

But on the other side of the door was something whose exuding mana surpassed the Slime Lord.

[I never imagined there'd be something with mana like this in a newly formed Dungeon...]

“My arms are itching.”

[Wait, our opponent's seriously dangerous. Let's get fully prepared.]

I applied Regeneration, a buff that continually heals wounds within a set period of time, and All Resist, a buff that increases resistance against status conditions within a set period of time. I also cast all the support magic I could like Status Boost and Senses Boost.

[Great, let's go.]

“Un!”

On the other side of the door was a room covered in man-made stones, distinct from the rest of the cave.

“Well, well! It’s a first-time guest! Welcome!”

Hmm, an undignified man was flying in the air.

He was intimidating with his black skin the color of tar, bat-like wings, and horns.

However, his flippant behavior nullified any intimidation. Any fear he could have inspired was cut in half.

I should Appraise him.

Name: Demon

Race: Demon. Demonic Beast

Lv: 30

HP: 1900 MP: 2409 Strength: 720 Agility: 675

Skills: Digging 3, Darkness Magic 4, Intimidation 4, Transport 2, Panic 4, Sword Techniques 5, Sword Wielding 5, Status Ailment Resistance, Status Condition Resistance 7, Earth Magic 7, Climbing 1, Poison Magic 7, Mana Ward 6, Shadow Magic 10, Cooking 1, Enhanced Darkness, Immunity to Darkness, Night Vision, Automatic Mana Regeneration, Immunity to Control, Strengthened Skin, Mana Boost [small], Strength Boost Small [small]

Extra Skill: Skill Taker 6

Title: Demon Lord

Equipment: Demonic Steel Long Sword

Summary: A Dungeon-exclusive being only summonable by Dungeon Masters. A descendent of the God of Chaos, and extremely Skilled at combat. When summoned, its abilities are based on the Dungeon Master that summoned it,

meaning it can have any variety of abilities. Magic Crystal Location: Heart.

[It's a Demon...]

He's ridiculously strong. This was my first time seeing stats above a thousand.

Darkness Magic: An advanced form of Shadow Magic. Able to manipulate darkness and shadows, poison and death.

Panic: Afflict the status condition <Panic> on any who look at the user.

Mana Ward: Deploy a barrier that resists physical and magical attacks.

Skill Taker: Steals a Skill from a target when conditions are met.

Wow, he has some annoying Skills.

[Fran, he's dangerous. If you get careless, you'll die right away!]

“Un!”

Thanks to the mana I absorbed from the goblins and army beetles, my mana was nearly topped off. I could use both Skills and spells as much as I wanted.

But even with all that, I couldn't say for certain that we could defeat the opponent in front of us.

He was that overwhelming.

I'd better always have the Return Feather ready in case we have to run away.

“Haha! So you're planning on coming at me! Hell yeah! But I won't hold back just because you're a kid, got it? After all, you passed through the Dungeon!”

“Hey, Demon! What're you doing! Hurry up and defeat her!”

Huh? At a closer look, I could see a goblin at the far end of the room.

He was speaking better than the usual goblin...

Name: Rare Goblin

Race: Demon

Lv: 11

HP: 25 MP: 131 Strength: 12 Agility: 13

Skills: Digging 2, Summon Bloodkin 5, Club Wielding 2, Speak One's Mind 2, Instructing 2, Spirit 1

Title: Dungeon Master

Equipment: Oak Club, Leather Robe, Divine Bracelet

He was a small fry, but he was definitely the Dungeon Master.

And that thing glowing in the wall is the Dungeon Core? (revise. Almost definitely incorrect)

That must mean this is the deepest part of the Dungeon.

But he really is a small fry. Did he really summon the Demon?

I understood why there were so many goblins and army beetles. They were perfectly suited to be subordinates for this Dungeon Master.

But isn't that Demon way too strong? Is this a special ability that Dungeon Masters have? This would have been fun if he had a Demon summoning Skill, but I couldn't find any such technique in the Dungeon Master's Skills.

Another disappointing part was that there was no Skill to control Dungeons.

The Dungeon Master likely used the Core to make the Dungeon. That may have been why there were no Dungeon Creation type Skills in its Skills list.

“Shut up! I’ll take care of that newbie so shut your face!”

“Shit. And I was having the time of my life spawning all these monsters with Goddess Points; all until I got this super rare Demon! Why won’t you listen to me! And why did I have to get a magic user type that always wants to fight in close range!”

I was able to understand the entirety of the situation based on this informative conversation.

This Demon had the Immunity to Control Skill. Because of that, the Dungeon Master wasn’t able to control the Demon whatsoever.

“Who’d have thought someone would be able to invade all the way to here! What did you do to my elite soldiers!”

“Ain’t it clear they got snuffed? They’re just goblins, after all.”

“There’s no way supreme beings like goblins would be bested by lowly creatures like humans!”

“Ah, sure, sure. Tis as you say.”

“Anyway, hurry up and kill that one!”

“I would’ve fought her regardless.”

As the Demon said that, he pulled out his sword.

“Hey, that a-hole’s damn noisy so I’m going.”

And with that, the Demon charged at us.

“Uryagh!”

“Hyaah!”

Cheeeng! Klang!

“Haha! What a good sword! To think it’d be able to go head to head with mine!”

Name: Demonic Steel Long Sword

Attack: 561+450 MP: 56 Durability: 1000

Mana Conversion Rate C+

Skills: Return to Wielder

It has a high Conversion Rate. Its attack power was already over 1000, perhaps indicating that it was already infused with mana. And because of the Return to Wielder Skill, every time the Demon threw its sword, it returned to its hand.

We were able to keep up with the Demon because I used 500 MP to increase my attack power. If I were careless, I might have shattered with his first attack. He's a scary opponent.

“So your sword Skills are good at this kind of stuff! But how about this?!”

“Ah...?”

He disappeared for a second but appeared immediately behind us.

“Agh!”

This is dangerous!

Fran's left arm was severed from the shoulder down.

Blood gushed out, and her HP dropped in an instant.

[What just happened....!]

I used Telekinesis to grab Fran's left arm and reattached it to her body.

In a panic, I cast Great Heal.

It was a Restoration Magic 1 spell that could reattach limbs. Securing Fran's arm to her body was easy.

“Huh? So you have some kind of Telekinesis Skill? And to have such high-level healing magic; this is gonna be fun! Are you a Spellsword?”

The Demon was smiling, but we were in no position to do the same.

[What's he doing now?]

The Demon disappeared in an instant and cut Fran from behind.

[Fran! Are you okay?]

“I’m, okay!”

“Well then, here I come!”

The Demon disappeared again. And he once again cut Fran from behind.

“Hup!”

Fran was paying attention to her back this time, and was just barely able to fend off his attack.

“So you’re already blocking my attacks! You have some good reflexes!”

That’s what happened. He clearly disappeared.

Teleportation? He didn’t have any Skills like that.

Then was it magic? Could it be because of his shadow magic or darkness magic...?

“Chyaagh!”

“Hah.”

That was it.

When the Demon disappeared, mana flowed out from his shadow. And he came out of Fran’s shadow.

Teleportation magic through shadows.

Now that I knew how he did it, I could figure out a response.

Because I could tell where he'd show up.

"Yahoo—Kugh!"

"Too cocky!"

"Kuhaha, nicely done! So you've already figured out my trick, have you?"

Tch. He sure is relaxed.

Even though I also used Telekinesis and Demonic Venomous Fangs in that attack that connected on his side.

"Huh? Is that poison? To think that you could bypass my Status Condition Resistance and poison me...truly well done!"

Yes, yes, so you're still acting like that! You combat-crazy bastard!

His HP was barely going down from the venom. I guess expecting a massive effect against an enemy with strong resistances is a no-go.

[Fran, let's try and hit his weak point.]

"Un."

Our advantage was that our opponent was still underestimating us. And also that he didn't notice my existence yet.

That's why I myself didn't attack and focused only on supporting Fran.

"Haaaa!"

"Hyahaha!"

Our blades once again clashed fiercely.

And around the two of them, a light began to shine.

Immediately after that, hobgoblins appeared from within the light. There were four of them.

“Go, my kin! Kill the intruder!”

The Dungeon Master did that.

To think that hobgoblins would show up here...they were so out of their leagues that they were actually afraid.

As expected, the hobgoblins were hesitating, unable to interfere in such a fierce and fast-paced battle.

“What are you doing?! Attack!”

Under the compulsion of the Dungeon Master’s command, the hobgoblins entered the fray, when...

“You’re in the way!”

One was sliced in half by the Demon’s sword.

Another was slain by Fran’s sword.

“Wha-What’re you doing?! You’re on the same side!”

“These shitty minions are getting in the way! And I’m having such a fine time right now. Screw off!”

The remaining hobgoblins were also sent almost pitifully to heaven because of the Demon’s sword.

I was beginning to feel bad for the Dungeon Master who was shaking with rage and humiliation.

Fran and the Demon ignored the Dungeon Master as their own battle became even

ficer.

The only sounds that could be heard in the hall were the deafening clashes of their swords colliding.

Fran had better sword Skills, but the Demon didn't even react to smaller wounds as he swung his sword, his superior strength and speed giving him the edge over Fran. Because of this, we were stuck in a stalemate.

But Fran had an immediate disadvantage in this battle. If even one of his attacks connect, she'll be cut in half.

"I'm having a blast! C'mon! But things'll never end at this rate!"

After saying that, the Demon repelled my blade completely and took a step back.

What's he planning?

"How about we settle things now! First, I'd better take away your ability to fight."

"?"

[This is dangerous. It's his Extra Skill!]

"Hahahaha. Devour, Skill Taker!"

The Demon raised his hand towards Fran and shouted.

[Kugh. He got us!]

Based on its name, that Skill let him steal the Skills of his target. I had assumed that because he hadn't used it until now, that it was a contact-type Skill or that it took a long time to activate or that its prerequisites were hard to meet.

The only reason why he didn't use it was because he felt it'd have been a waste to use it earlier! And what's worse, he could use the Skill without making physical contact!

Since he said it so confidently, that must mean he satisfied the conditions to use it.

Did he steal Fran's Sword Wielding or Sword Techniques?

Even though we worked so hard to improve those Skills! Will we have to level them up again?!

And even worse, if he takes Sword Wielding now, he'll have taken away our ability to fight!

[Things are looking bad, so I'm going to use the Return Feather!]

"Un!"

We were completely focused on the Demon to not miss even his most subtle movement, but he remained still, his hand still raised.

It didn't look like Fran felt any ill-effect either.

[.....]

"....."

Huh?

[...Fran, you okay?]

"Un?"

"Tch! It failed!"

Thank goodness. For whatever reason, it looks like he failed.

Was it that he was unable to steal anything?

Since we're a bit of a special case.

It wasn't incorrect to say that the Skills Fran use are mine; in other words, those Skills belong to the weapon she has equipped that were being shared with a special ability. Maybe a Skill stealing Skill doesn't work on Fran because he couldn't steal them from a piece of equipment.

“Fuck my life! There’s no helping it if it didn’t work. Then try this for size! Darkness Bolt!”

The Demon made a sudden change and used darkness magic.

A huge vortex of darkness cut apart the earth like a drill and flew at Fran.

He started using magic.

Based on his status, he was likely originally a ranged attacker.

“Hah!”

But it didn’t hit Fran.

“C’mooon! One more’s coming your way!”

“Hup!”

“Tch!”

His attacks were powerful, but lacking in variety.

Like how Fran’s attacks were before her death match against the goblin mob.

Though his attacks were powerful, it seemed like he lacked combat experience. It must not have been that long since the Dungeon Master made him.

“Darkness Spear!”

“Fire Wall!”

“Darkness Blaster!”

“Pathetic.”

“You’re just dashing all over the place!”

He likely had other darkness magic spells that were harder to dodge. Using those would make things a lot worse for us.

But he continued to only use insta-kill spells.

Regardless, Fran was at a disadvantage.

There was a difference in skill between the two of them.

None of Fran's attacks could take him down, but any one of his would end Fran in an instant.

Fran slowly became less talkative as well. She was likely focusing all her attention on the battle.

Is now a good time to run away?

But we didn't make much progress.

I was sure that we completed the objective of stopping the goblins from heading towards the city by giving them hell in their own den.

Well, this was originally a C or D rank assignment.

All that was left was this Demon. If we took care of him, then it'd be the same as taking control of this Dungeon.

But I wanted to tire out that bastard a little bit more because if we were to escape, then Dunadron and his group would have to fight him.

“Black Bomb!”

“Ugh.”

“Hyaah!”

The Demon who had been getting angrier and angrier began using large-scale magic.

This is dangerous. The Dungeon Master continued to shout at the Demon. He was only

alive because this space is so small.

Though if this space were bigger, the Demon may have used stronger large-scale magic.

The Dungeon Master's here as well, so the Demon likely can't.

[No, wait.]

I had a good idea.

[The Demon's a demonic beast connected to the Dungeon.]

I should think about what Dunadron said.

We received a large variety of explanations on the Dungeon Core and the Dungeon Master.

The important thing in our current situation was that he said that killing the Dungeon Master is the same as destroying the Core, and that doing so would cause all the demonic beasts to die off.

In that case...

[This Demon will disappear if you kill that goblin.]

“——Fire Arrow.”

“Ack, you bitch! How cowardly!”

The Demon returned to the Dungeon Master with a confused look on his face.

It seems my guess isn't wrong.

The Dungeon Master may have a Divine Bracelet equipped, but if we were able to kill him once, we'd be able to do so immediately after he revived as well. The Demon had no choice but to keep the Dungeon Master covered.

Because even if he can resist the Dungeon Master's control, he's still chained to the

Dungeon Master.

“Heh.”

“You brat, you’re gonna make me angry!”

[Fire Javelin!]

“No way, is she a silent caster?”

No, it’s just that I cast that magic secretly.

“Fire Arrow.”

[Tri Explosion.]

“Fire Arrow.”

[Flare Blast!]

Bam, boom, bang!

Those spells, shot in rapid succession, engulfed the Demon.

“Kugh.”

“Heek!”

Just the heat would have been enough to kill the Dungeon Master, so the Demon had no choice but to endure our attacks like a punching bag.

“You idiot! That’s why I told you to always fight in front of me!”

“Sh-Shhh-Shut up! Without you, all the defenses in this room would disappear!”

The Dungeon Master was alive because he’s an idiot.

The Demon’s HP went down by quite a bit. But he had higher magic resistance than I expected.

At this rate, we'll run out of mana first.

[Fran, time for a strategy change.]

“Okay.”

I kept up the barrage of magic while Fran used the wind magic we gained in an earlier fight.

The Wind Magic 4 spell, Sonic Shooter. Simply put, it's a spell that uses wind to increase the speed of something we throw. And we can control the direction a little.

“I'm going.”

[Yeah, whenever you're ready.]

“Hyah!”

Fran timed it carefully and threw me.

[Yahoo!]

With Sonic Shooter's effect, I flew towards them at blistering speeds. Aimed at the spot above the Demon's right shoulder, straight for the Dungeon Master.

“So you're playing tricks! Is that wind magic? But do you really think I'll let you?!”

Fran shot magic at the Dungeon Master, so the Demon couldn't move right away.

But even then, the Demon extended his right arm to catch me.

Even though I was going so fast, the Demon was able to see me clearly.

And the Demon closed his fist——but was unable to get a hold on me.

“Noo! Gyah!”

I changed my path with wind magic and unleashed the Telekinesis I had been storing

until now. This was the attack I used a long time ago, the Telekinetic Catapult Attack.

And I dove for the Demon's now injured body.

Of course, I focused the majority of my remaining mana to my blade.

This was my final attack. If I fail, then we'd have no choice but to run away with the Return Feather—.

“There’s...no way...”

[Looks like it worked...]

That impossibly strong Demon was unable to block the Telekinetic Catapult Attack. I pierced through the Demon’s Barrier and his chest was impaled deeply by my blade.

But in a turn of events shocking enough to give even me the chills, the Demon was holding his sword in his left hand. How?!

If I hadn’t used so much of my mana to increase my power, I might not have been able to impale him through his left arm as well.

This Demon was no joke.

“Kuuuu...”

I sliced through his magic crystal perfectly. And I absorbed it through my blade.

“Kuaaaaa...—.”

<Self-Evolution has been activated. 40 Self-Evolution Points gained>

Great! Just what I’d expect from a Demon’s magic crystal. When we entered this place, my Magic Crystal Points was at 2699/2800, but now it was 3199/3600. His magic crystal gave me a shocking 500 points.

“N-No way, the Demon was...?”

The Dungeon Master was stupefied. But I suppose that was to be expected,

considering that that overwhelmingly powerful Demon was defeated by a little girl like Fran.

But is it really okay for you to be standing so defenselessly in front of your enemy?

“Hah!”

“Kuaaaagh!”

Without missing a beat as usual, Fran swung her sword to shoot out an Aura Blade that sent the Dungeon Master’s right arm flying.

Both his arm and his Divine Bracelet fell to the ground.

And Fran mercilessly severed the Dungeon Master’s head from his body as he screamed in pain and terror.

Even if he was a Dungeon Master, he was still a goblin. There was no way he could withstand Fran’s full-power Aura Blade.

The Dungeon Core that had until now been shining brightly suddenly went dark.

But that was all that happened.

[...Nothing’s happening.]

“Master, did we win?”

[I think so, but...]

I kind of wish there was a more noticeable change after we defeated the Dungeon Master. I was ready for something like an earthquake to happen, but there really was nothing.

We did defeat the Dungeon Master, right?

Well, the demonic beasts should all have died off so we’ll know once we get out of this room.

[Ah, is the Demon's corpse all right?]

Confused, Fran looked at his corpse, but there was absolutely no change. Thank goodness. I was worried his loot——no, corpse would turn into sand, but it remained as it was.

I didn't store his corpse. It was a waste, but I thought that I should leave it with the Guild. Considering we owe them for going in first.

Also, even if we did store the corpse, hiding it would be difficult. Because the corpse is connected with the Dungeon Core's system.

Even a human can use the Core while it's in a dormant state. And apparently, someone who touches the Core can see those who became the Dungeon Master previously. In other words, whoever utilizes the Dungeon Core here will see the Demon's name pop up.

And, of course, we'll be found out if we take the Demon's materials. And then we'll be the subject of everyone's envy and hatred.

Thus, I decided to leave the corpse to the Guild.

But to do that, we'll need to do some deceiving. We shot an Explosion at the Demon's heart region, resulting in a massive hole in his chest.

That way, we could give the excuse, "Fran's attack destroyed the Demon's magic crystal and only left his corpse."

We could have had Fran claim the magic crystal as her own, but then Fran's share of the loot would be too big. The other adventurers would definitely resent her.

Well, there'll probably be quite a few of them who won't believe our ruse, but there's no helping that. Regardless, there's no magic crystal for them to find.

We took his sword. We might be able to sell it by keeping its origin a secret. In the worst case, we could probably melt it down and sell it as a material. We also decided to take the Divine Bracelet from the Dungeon Master's amputated arm. It would probably be useful later.

Diving Bracelet gained!

"We won."

Fran raised her fist into the air and made a victory pose. Our tactics may have been cowardly, but she was happy just to have beaten a stronger opponent than her.

<Fran's level has gone up--->

<Fran's level has--->

<Fran's level--->

<Fran's--->



Fran's leveled up eight times!

I was worried about whether the experience would pass on to Fran if I defeated the Demon, but it looked like, because I'm her equipment, it counted as Fran defeating him. Could throwing the sword count as defeating the Demon?

We only won because of the Dungeon Master's incompetence, so we really caught a lucky break.

So, since entering the Dungeon, Fran's level went up by 13.

Du-du-du.

Oh, it looks like the seal on the door dissolved.

"Hey! Little lady, you in here?"

"H-Hey, that's a Demon!"

"F-For real?!"

Following the raid on the Dungeon, we headed back to the city.

Both bone-weary exhaustion and blissful joy dominated the faces of the adventurers.

Though the adventurers suffered about ten casualties, this was apparently good news for a demonic beast disaster of this size.

The adventurers were thankful to us for finishing the raid so quickly and eradicating all the demonic beasts.

At least some of that gratitude may have stemmed from the fact that we didn't monopolize on the Demon's corpse.

No, that was probably most of the reason why.

They said the loot from the Demon was worth more than the loot from demonic beasts of the same rank as him. Because Demons only show up in those Dungeons.

We were even told that Demons not only provide more experience, but that they are one of the strongest Threat Level B demonic beasts.

It seemed like Demons were valuable targets. Though we were the ones who had to be wary of them.

And Dunadron scolded Fran for going off on her own. He lectured us for a good hour.

Fran would have started sulking if I laughed so I held in my laughter, but the scene of a barbarian king looking man lecture a little beastkin girl, rather than looking like a crime, was comedic.

The lecture would likely have lasted longer if not for the intervention of the boy who argued with Fran before the raid.

The mercenaries who argued with Fran were dead, but he defended Fran by saying that she saved him from suffering the same fate as those mercenaries.

[That kid... He's a good one.]

'You won't be able to talk your way out of this.'

[So you figured out what I was doing?]

'Master didn't get scolded. Unfair.'

[Calm down.]

'I was the only one who was scolded.'

[I said I'm sorry.]

'Then make me meat.'

[Okay.]

'With seasoning.'

[Got it.]

‘And steak and skewers also.’

[Okay.]

This may have been because I kept making food from Earth for Fran, but Fran was beginning to act like a “big eater” character.

Well, if it’ll make her feel better, then I’ll make as much as she wants.

And to commemorate the fact that she defeated the Demon, an opponent so much stronger than herself, I should let her eat her fill.

Oh wait, maybe I should check out the results of our labor before we arrive in the city.

This was my Status before defeating the Demon.

Attack: 392 MP: 1650/1650 Durability: 1450/1450

Self-Evolution <Rank 7 Magic Crystal Points 2699/2800 Memory 62 Points 9>

And then my Status became this:

Name: Master

Wielder: Fran

Race: Intelligence Weapon

Attack: 434 MP: 2050/2050 Durability: 1850/1850

Mana Conversion Rate A

Self-Evolution <Rank 8 Magic Crystal Points 3199/3600 Memory 70 Points 49>

Skills: Appraisal 7, High Speed Self-recovery, Telekinesis, Telekinesis Boost [weak], Telepathy, Attack Boost [small], Wielder Stat Boost , Wielder Recovery Boost [small], Mana Boost [small], Memory Increase , Appraisal Block, Demonic Beast Knowledge, Skill Sharing, Magician

My Skills' levels also went up a lot. This was because the Hobgoblins and Army Beetles also had high leveled Skills. Because I could absorb their Skill levels as well, my own levels continued to increase. The level 1 Wind Magic I gained just a few hours ago was now level 7. In just a single day, it increased by 6 levels.

Sword Techniques went from 7 to 8, Sword Wielding became 9, Status Condition Resistance became 3, Earth Magic became 5. A bunch of Skills besides those also leveled up.

There were also a lot of new Skills I gained in the Dungeon. In particular, Darkness Magic 1, Mana Barrier 1, Shadow Magic 2, Sense Traps 1, Enhanced Darkness, Immunity to Darkness, Automatic Mana Regeneration, and Immunity to Control all seemed useful. Most of all, I could restore my mana simply by Setting Automatic Mana Regeneration. The effect was minimal, but I was extremely thankful to be able to restore my mana without any risk.

In addition, I got the Extra Skill, Skill Taker 1.

I also got 40 Self-Evolution Points, but because there were so many Skills I wanted to use those Points on, that amount was actually too little.

I should increase the levels of Sword Techniques and Sword Wielding, then focus on magic. And because I got Enhanced Darkness, should I level up Darkness Magic? I also might level up Summon Bloodkin if that Skill ends up being useful. And the Skills I originally gave up on, Instant Regeneration and Status Condition Resistance. Plus, the Skill I just got, Skill Taker, is a candidate for leveling up as well. Add in the fact that I had to factor in the Superior Skills I could obtain, and my worries were far from over.

In addition, Fran reached level 25.

Her level went up by 8 just from fighting against the Demon.

The experience that would have been shared among a Party was instead focused all on Fran.

Name: Fran Age: 12 years old

Race: Beastkin. Black Cat

Job: Spellsword

Status: Contracted

Lv: 25

HP: 193 MP: 127 Strength: 140 Agility: 146

Skills: Goblin Killer, Mental Stability, Skinning, Cool Judgement, Sense Directions, Night Vision

<NEW> Insect Killer, Demon Killer

Titles: Veteran of Insurmountable Odds, Dismantling Master, Recovery Arts User, Goblin Killer, Patron of Slaughter, Flame Arts User, Cooking Master

<NEW> Insect Killer, Mighty Hunter, Dungeon Invader, Demon Killer

Insect Killer: A title bestowed to those who slayed three hundred insect type Demonic Beasts in a single battle. Insect Killer Skill gained.

Mighty Hunter: A title bestowed to those who defeated a much stronger opponent alone. HP increased by 20, all Stats increased by 5, growth rate increased slightly.

Dungeon Invader: A title bestowed to those who defeated a Dungeon Master or destroyed a Dungeon Core. HP and MP recovery speeds increased when in a Dungeon.

Demon Killer: A title bestowed to those who have slain a Demon. Demon Killer Skill gained.

Mighty Hunter? Looks like another cheat title popped up. It was a powerful title just like Veteran of Insurmountable Odds. Thanks to it, Fran's Status changed abnormally.

Now she could fight head-to-head against Dunadron. Fran! What a scary kid!

No, this was all my fault.

Fran is overflowing with ambition, so she probably won't become arrogant. And it's highly likely she'll want to go into dangerous places. So I need to stay vigilant and support Fran!

And to do that, I needed to level up my Skills.

[Hey, Fran, which Skills do you want to level up?]

‘Sword Techniques and Sword Wielding.’

[Makes sense.]

I noticed this earlier, but magic doesn't have a big effect against opponents who are better at magic than us. But with a sword, it was possible to beat someone even in a disadvantageous situation. Because she had a sword like me with a high mana conversion rate and mana.

[So I'll level up Sword Techniques and Sword Wielding?]

“Un.”

[Great, I'll do that.]

Yes, and I did.

I used 6 Self-Evolution Points to get Sword Techniques 10 and Sword Wielding 10.

<Sword Techniques 10 reached. Expert Sword Techniques 1 added to Skills>

<Sword Wielding 10 reached. Expert Sword Wielding 1 added to Skills>

<Sword Techniques 10 and Sword Wielding 10 reached. Sword Attribute 1 added to Skills>

I know what Expert Sword Techniques and Expert Sword Wielding mean, but what is Sword Attribute?

It seemed like it meant I could make a sword have a certain magical attribute for a set amount of time.

I won't be able to know until I use it.

Then what should I do about the rest?

The thing that caught my attention the most was Skill Taker.

Skill Taker 1: Has a 50% chance of stealing a target's Skill given that the Skill is both Rarity 1 or lower and is level 1. Only able to use once on the same target. Must wait one day to use Skill again. Range is Skill level x 1 meter.

So the Rarity of a Skill matters. Though I haven't been able to see the Rarity of any Skills, maybe because my Appraisal's level is too low.

With this, collecting Skills should become a lot easier.

And if we can use this Skill to seal off an opponent's Skill, then it'll make combat a lot easier as well. Most of all, this meant we could take Skills from those without magic crystals—in other words, we could take Skills from humans.

The problem was that this Skill can only be used once on a single target. And if it fails, then it'll be impossible to take any Skills from that same target ever again.

A 50% chance...that figure was too low for comfort. Plus the success rate was too low to rely on.

What should I do? No, this Skill already had me in its hooks.

I wonder what Fran will think.

[Fran, about Skill Taker——.]

I explained what I was thinking to Fran.

'That sounds good.'

[You think so?]

'It's an Extra Skill so it'll definitely be powerful.'

[Great, then I'll level it up.]

And I did as I said.

First, I leveled it up to 2.

Skill Taker 2: Has a 60% chance of stealing a target's Skill given that the Skill is both Rarity 2 or lower and is level 2 or lower. Only able to use once on the same target. Must wait two days to use Skill again. Range is Skill level x 1 meter.

No way, at level 2 it went up to 60%? Th-That's awesome! I should keep leveling it up!

It took 3 points to level an Extra Skill up once. I ended up with only 16 Self-Evolution Points left, but I didn't regret it at all.

Skill Taker 10: Has a 100% chance of stealing a target's Skill given that the Skill is both Rarity 10 or lower and is level 10 or lower. Only able to use once on the same target. Must wait eighteen days to use Skill again. Range is Skill level x 1 meter.

So I can only use this Skill once every eighteen days. I'll need to pick when I use it carefully. Well, since both Fran and I can use it, that means we'll have two chances. We have a lot more luxury than others.

And I'll need to keep an eye out for what Skills are Rarity 10.

Should I increase my Appraisal level? If that let us take Extra Skills or Unique Skills, then this Skill is absurdly powerful. It really is a cheat ability.

I wanted to use it right away.

But the only ones around us were our allies. Aren't there any bandits or someone?

Though that was doubtful considering how many adventurers there were here.

In the end, we arrived uneventfully at the guild.

The guild was in an uproar.

Everyone was cheerful because of our victory and the payment that the guild would give.

“Little lady, please come this way.”

“Un.”

Fran followed Dunadronnd into the Guild Master’s room.

But none of the adventurers around us were surprised.

Because they all considered Fran the greatest asset in the raid.

Even the adventurers who were skeptical of the rumors about Fran now knew the truth because of today’s activities.

“Lucky girl, I bet she’s going to get a bonus.”

“She really did a lot so there’s no helping it.”

“She saved me as well.”

“How does someone so young become so strong?”

“She’s a monster. A freaking monster.”

“I wonder if she’ll join our Party.”

“Haa, haa, Fran’s so adorable.”

50% liked her, 40% were jealous of her, and 10% hated her.

But that last guy was a little scary!

“Ahh, Fran-san. I apologize for the wait.”

“Un.”

"First I must give you my thanks. Thanks to you, we ended the raid with few casualties. To think that a Demon would be in a Dungeon like that...if they had kept going, then there would have been many more casualties."

Though he started speaking to us with lighthearted thanks, his eyes were not smiling at all.

I won't be able to distract him like Dunadron. He still had his doubts about us.

"The truth is, going off on your own did impose a hassle on the group, but because you were able to provide so much help by doing so, I will disregard your disobeying orders."

After weighing the pros and cons of what we did, he decided not to reprimand us.

"I saw the corpse of the Demon you defeated."

Dunadron likely showed him it.

"In truth, it is a Threat Level B individual. Did you defeat it by yourself?"

"Un."

"If that is true, then that means you have the ability of an A rank adventurer."

It was nice to have our ability assessed, but suddenly being elevated to rank A would mean we'd be assigned dangerous requests, and that sounded like a pain.

"I was lucky."

"Hoo? What do you mean?"

So we decided to tell the truth about this part.

"I see. So you defeated the Demon by using a sneak attack while he was concerned with the Dungeon Master..."

"The Dungeon Master was an idiot."

“Even so, it is strange that you did not die right away. And in regard to the Demon’s corpse...”

“?”

“The fatal injury to his heart. How many people do you believe are capable of piercing through a Demon’s barrier with magic?”

“How many?”

“Hmm...well, that doesn’t matter. This is the main point.”

So he’s definitely going to ask about that.

“What happened to the Demon’s magic crystal?”

“I destroyed it.”

“...It is a tiny object. That magic crystal is incredibly useful. The entire nation would desire such an object.”

“Un.”

“Is it really gone?”

“It already doesn’t exist in this world.”

Because I absorbed it, of course.

“Hoo. Understood. I will believe you.”

Did he decide to move on because Fran didn’t lie?

And this happened when I relaxed.

“Wait! Are you seriously going to just leave it like that?!”

Someone violently opened the door and barged in.

The man who barged in was clad in armor but his large rolls of fat gave him an air of unhealthiness.

Who is that? I've never seen him before.

And I couldn't sense him at all... Ah, was it because of his equipment?

Name: August Alsand **Age: 29 years old**

Race: Human

Job: Warrior

Status: Normal

Lv: 30

HP: 108 MP: 99 Strength: 52 Agility: 45

Skills: Acting 1, Singing 1, Horse Riding 1, Deception 1, Royal Court Etiquette 4, Sword Wielding 1, Arithmetic 1, Social 2, Poison Resistance 1, Poison Knowledge 2, Herbology 2

Unique Skill: Logical Falsehood 5

Titles: Baron, Vice-Captain of the Alessa Knight's Order

Equipment: Mythril Longsword, Silver Iron Full Body Armor, Official's Cloak, Ring of Silent Footsteps

Something didn't quite fit.

He was level 30, but his stats were low. I guess he was at the level of an E rank adventurer.

And his Skills were incredibly shoddy.

He probably had the Social Skill because he was a nobleman.

But wasn't Sword Wielding 1 way too low for a knight? And to top it all off, he was a vice-captain.

“What could you possibly mean by simply moving on? Sir August.”

“Exactly what I said. We’re talking about a Demon’s magic crystal. There’s no way a little girl can be allowed to keep such a valuable item!”

“To think that I was wondering what you were thinking. In this raid, participants were allowed to keep whatever loot they took from demonic beasts they defeated. Thus, this young lady who defeated the Demon has the right to the magic crystal. Rather, she left the loot for the guild to collect, so there is no reason to reprimand her.”

“Quit splitting hairs. To an extent, taking Hobgoblin loot is no problem. But a low-rank adventurer can’t be allowed to keep something so high-rank as a Demon’s loot.”

So he’s thinking that it’d be a waste to allow us to keep the loot now when there were such amazing ones, is that it?

“Meaning that that little girl acted on her own. She’s guilty of disobeying orders! Are you saying that someone like her still deserves her payment?”

“Sigh. If all those who disobeyed orders are guilty of committing a crime, then that would apply to the majority of the adventurers there. There are very few instances in which an adventurer, in the same position as her, would not disobey orders. Rather, I would like to meet an adventurer who has never disobeyed orders or broken rules.”

“So you really are a lousy bunch.”

“Well, this is because, unlike the prim and proper Knight’s Order, we have quite the unruly assortment of people here.”

The Guild Master’s eyes weren’t smiling at all. I could feel how threatening his eyes were.

I was actually in awe of the nobleman who had yet to notice that fact. Did his obliviousness stem from the thick folds of his face?

“Hmph. I’ll tell you something. That girl is lying.”

Flinch.

Did he know that because of his Unique Skill?

Logical Falsehood: Able to see through a target's lies. Makes it more difficult for others to see through the user's lies. Makes user's lies more believable to others.

It was the perfect Skill for swindlers, dictators, and religious leaders.

But he's the vice-captain of the Knight's order despite having a Skill like this? Is he supposed to be the hated character from fantasy novels? There are too few characters to tell!

The Skill seems like it could create a whole lot of trouble depending on how it's used...

But no matter how amazing a Skill it is, it still needed a proper user.

Though we were being intensely interrogated.

However, the next thing he said was beyond my expectations.

"She said she destroyed the magic crystal, but that was a lie. She must have it hidden somewhere."

Huh? No, but that wasn't a lie? It really was destroyed.

"...Even if that is the case, the young lady still possesses ownership of it."

"No, I cannot forgive one who would give a false report in a case like this. She may be hiding other things as well."

"I did destroy it."

"So you're telling more lies."

What the heck is he saying?

Even though he must know she wasn't lying because of Logical Falsehood.

No, I get it. It must be well known that he has the Skill Logical Falsehood.

And anyone that he calls a liar will be treated as such.

Using that, he was trapping Fran.

“Un?”

[Fran, don’t talk for a while.]

‘Okay.’

What should I do?

“This is not an official hearing. We are, to an extent, listening to what she has to say in private. Thus, I believe that there is no need to rebuke her for telling some small lies.”

He was trying to protect us, maybe because he didn’t like noblemen. I was thankful.
Do your best, Guild Master.

“She lied to me, a nobleman. Regardless of the occasion, that is a crime.”

“Though I am repeating myself, I did not think that a lie would be tantamount to a crime.”

“Regardless! This little girl can’t be trusted. After listening to her, isn’t it obvious that she doesn’t know her place?! She may even be a spy from another nation. I want all her possessions delivered to the Knight’s Order. We need to go over her belongings. Then I will overlook her transgressions.”

The heck? What in the world is he saying? Go over Fran’s belongings? What an obvious threat. Does he really think we’ll just go along with that?

“What in the world are you saying?! ”

“Your Adventurer’s Guild ignored the Knight’s Order and raided the goblins. You must not have wanted to share the loot with the elite Knight’s Order. How typical of you lowly adventurers. But I’ll overlook all that as well if you hand over the Demon’s materials.”

"Pardon? We did contact the Knight's Order. Along with our strategy and the date and time of the raid."

"Hmph, don't you lie to me! Hand over half of all the loot you gained, all of the Demon's materials, and that little girl's belongings."

"Half of all the loot? All of the Demon's materials? We have no reason to give those things to the Knight's Order when you have done nothing."

"How dare you say that after purposefully ignoring us! You damn adventurers were so overtaken with greed that you neglected to defend the city. We maintained public order while you were all at the goblins' den!"

"Kuh. Something that only happened because you chose to ignore our request for reinforcements."

"What'd you say?"

"No, I did not say anything."

That aside.

The knights were so afraid of the hobgoblins that they refused to heed the adventurers' request for help.

But the knights, after seeing how few casualties the adventurers suffered during the raid, desired the profits of our labors.

Now, who's the real crook here?

"Hey, start by handing over that sword. It looks really well made. Where'd you steal it from? Tell me the truth."

This piece of shit noble bastard walked towards us.

'Should I cut him down?'

[Wait. Let's keep watching what happens.]

I really did want to cut him down.

"The knights have no authority over the Guild. But despite that, you, a nobleman, are giving us commands? And you are telling us to hand over the majority of our spoils, goods that adventurers laid down their lives for?"

"Of course. That's my right."

This bastard just agreed to that.

This made the Guild Master's temper flare malevolently.

Wow, despite being this mad, he was still able to keep his cool and not get violent.

And on top of all that, he was even feigning a smile. You're kind of cool, Guild Master.

"You can start by signing this contract. Here, sign this, saying that you agree to transfer the materials."

"Does the order itself know of this? Including the Captain?"

"...Of course."

"Then it should be okay for me to send an enquiry, yes?"

"What? There's no need to do that."

"I am the one who will decide that."

Somehow, the tables had turned.

"Do you have a problem with me sending an enquiry?"

"Don't make jokes! Are you trying to say that I'm lying?! H-How disappointing. I will take my leave for today!"

Wow. It felt like we just scored a palpable hit. He was obviously worried.

He must have come here without telling the Captain because he wanted to score some points against the Guild or to get our profits or something.

[Great, now let's test it on him.]

Test what, you ask? Skill Taker, of course.

Luckily, he had a Unique Skill.

'I want to do it too.'

[Yeah. I'll try it out first.]

My target was the Unique Skill. But this skill was hard to use for anyone who didn't have Appraisal.

The Demon didn't have Appraisal. So though he said he was going to steal Fran's skills, was he unable to carry it out because her Skills themselves were intrinsically different? I think in the early levels, Skill Taker chose something at random.

Or did the Dungeon Master forget to give the Demon Appraisal? Hm, I wouldn't be surprised.

"I'll be back!"

Shoot, my prey was leaving.

[I'm doing it. Skill Taker!]

Skill captured. Another strong point of this Skill was that it could be used while leaving the target totally unaware of what happened.

I secretly stole the Skill.

I got Logical Falsehood 5. I was able to steal Unique Skills.

The real danger of Skill Taker was that I could even steal the levels.

If we take a high-level Skill, we'll immediately be experts at it.

The only drawback was that because it appeared as one of my Skills rather than a Set Skill, I couldn't share Logical Falsehood with Fran.

The opposite was proven true as well. We'll need to choose which one of us should use which Skills.

"Skill Taker."

Fran muttered this softly. And this was a success as well.

She took his highest-level Skill, Royal Court Etiquette 4.

Heheheh. Just wait until you realize you've lost your most important Skills!

'Master, I did it.'

[Yeah. This was a huge success.]

'Should I cut him down now?'

[Why do you keep asking that? Is there a reason why you want to so bad?]

'Because he's a rude prick.'

I got the feeling that our child was slowly becoming more dangerous.

Will her recently acquired Royal Court Etiquette help her speak properly? No, I highly doubt it.

"Phew. I must apologize for what just happened."

"Who was that?"

"The son of a Baron and the vice-captain of the Alessa Knight's Order. He bought his way into his position, and his family's wealth makes him insufferable to deal with. Around last year, he was ordered here every time something happened, so he came to hate this city. Though this is the first time he came here with such absurd demands."

“I’ll complain to the Knight’s Order.”

“There is no point. For the most part, their parents simply ignore any such complaints. This is how he was raised to be such a dimwit. In addition, any haphazard attempts to get him punished would be preempted by his Skill, Logical Falsehood.”

“He’s a vice-captain even though he’s a weakling? All you need is money?”

“Ask that question to anyone in the land. And though he is a weakling, his level is quite high. Though nobles only do this occasionally, they sometimes join a strong knight’s party and level up by hunting beasts.”

Was the Guild Master actually roasting his boss?

So that’s why his combat Skills were so low.

Not only did he have no combat experience, but his level of 30 was due only to a knight.

“I’ll send him flying the next time I see him.”

“If possible, please refrain from doing that. It is okay. Though the Vice-Captain is an utter fool, he does have to listen to the Captain. If you tell the Captain, then he will settle down for a while.”

“Then it’s fine.”

“Thank you. Because if you harm him, then the repercussions will reach us as well.”

So it was all for your sake?!

Well, in his case, rather than a lasting relationship, we could use him in a sort of give-and-take.

“Thank you once again for giving us the Demon’s materials. Thanks to you, our guild has become wealthier.”

“Un.”

“But do you really not have the Demon’s magic crystal?”

C'mon, Guild Master, you too?!

“I am joking.”

“That was close.”

“What do you mean?”

“I was about to hit you.”

“Hahahaha. That is quite the scary threat. Then please do take care of yourself. He is a man who is not above trapping others by using his ability to see through lies.”

“I'll be fine.”

“Understood. Though I do not mind your nonchalance...”

“Can I go now?”

“Yes, thank you very much. Ah, please wait.”

“Un?”

“Please go to the front desk and raise your rank. The documents have already been accepted.”

“Again?”

“Yes. You have once again accomplished an absurd feat. An adventurer who defeated a Demon single-handedly cannot continue to call herself an F rank adventurer. For now, we will raise your rank to D.”

“Not E?”

“I wanted to make you rank C, but the other branches refused to agree.”

I see. It was hard to believe that a newbie adventurer could single-handedly defeat a rank B Demon. It's not like this is a novel or something.

I was thankful just to be rank D.

“Okay. I’ll go to the front desk.”

“Thank you very much. Your reward will be there as well. With an added bonus.”

“Un.”

The other adventurers were in an uproar after we went to the front desk and they heard that our rank was going up.

Apparently, this was the fastest anyone had ever ranked up before in this Guild.

Because it had only been four days since we entered.

Based on what I heard, the adventurers had made bets on whether we’d ranked up or not. But they were blown away by the fact that we’d gone up two ranks.

People were shouting about that more than anything else.

“Haha! Thanks to you, young lady, I made a lot of dough!”

“Damn it! I just lost a crap ton!”

“Wahahaha.”

“Hey, want a cup of the hard stuff?”

“You idiot, such a little kid can’t drink alcohol!”

“Yes, I do.”

“Whoa! For real?!”

“Then I’ll buy you some apple juice!”

And this is how Fran’s adventurer rank went up to D.

Rank D, huh. Now she was a full-fledged middle-grade adventurer.

I thought about this today, but wouldn't it be better to tell the adventurers about me one day? Something like this might happen again.

It shouldn't be too strange for a rank D adventurer to have a magic sword.

A sword that gets stronger by absorbing magic crystals. Revealing myself would probably make things more convenient for Fran as well.

But what about the fact that I'm an Intelligence Weapon... Maybe I should ask Old Man Garth for advice next time I see him.

Well, the majority of the adventurers probably already think Fran's hiding it, so that part shouldn't be a problem. Their tune would simply change from 'She's hiding it' to 'She absorbed it with her sword.'

When I think about it like that, giving the Demon's materials to the Guild may have been a really good idea.

Because apparently everyone received a bonus thanks to that.

Maybe we should buy alcohol today. Cultivating even a small sense of camaraderie is important, after all.

"I'll pay for it today."

"What're you saying?! So a little tyke like you is going to treat us?!"

"It's okay. I got a bonus."

"Whoa. You sure are loaded!"

"I'm not."

"Kuhaha, you're a fun kid, aren't you!"

"Great, I guess I'll drink as much as I lost today!"

“Wahahaha!”

I never imagined it'd end up costing 100,000 gil...

EPILOGUE

Fran fell asleep.

I'm sure she didn't drink any alcohol... I guess this makes sense since she fought in battle.

The Demon was strong. I really thought we were going to lose.

And it wasn't only the Demon. I was a simple company worker until just a few months ago, but here I was fighting demonic beasts. Isn't that hard to believe?

I only realized this after talking to myself, but a few months have already passed since I reincarnated in this world...

Time flew by in a flash. In such a short time, I fought countless demonic beasts.

First goblins, then Lesser Wyverns and Slimes, Tyrant Saber-Toothed Tigers and Hobgoblins.

If I were a human, I'd have probably died against the first goblins I encountered.

I may have been in utter confusion when I reincarnated as a sword, but I've started to think that it wasn't so bad.

Because I was able to use magic and abilities that I could only dream of on Earth.

I had those powers.

And I met Fran.

It was hard to believe that it had only been five days since we met.

Probably because it had been such an super dense, memorable five days.

I freed Fran from slavery and broke out of the Demon Wolf's Plain. Fran became an adventurer, we met a lot of people, fought to the death against goblins, and intruded

into a Dungeon swarming with hobgoblins. And lastly, we just barely defeated the Demon and the Dungeon Master.

Hm, there actually wasn't that much stuff that happened.

How many events did we go through?

But this was the best five days of my two lives.

It may be strange to have the sense of being alive even as a sword, but in my life, I had never felt as I did in these five days.

“Un...”

[Fran?]

Did she just turn in her sleep?

I used telekinesis and gently put the blanket back on her.

Her sleeping face was cute.

No, I'm not a lolicon.

Of course, Fran is quite pretty.

Her slightly curly black hair, pale skin, and fluffy cat ears were all cute.

But that wasn't the emotion that I felt.

What I felt was actually closer to a guardian's affection. Though I had no way of telling if what I felt was that of a father or the protective instinct of a sword for his wielder.

Watching Fran breathe softly as she slept, I felt that I wanted to protect unconditionally.

In just five days.

In such a short time, I couldn't even imagine parting from Fran.

If I were to be offered a way back to Earth, I would without a doubt decline.

That was the strength of my experiences after being in this other world for several months and these five days with Fran.

[This other world...]

I looked through the inn's window and up into the night sky.

Four moons were shining around the large, silver crescent moon, as if surrounding it.

Whenever I saw this scene, it becomes clear to me that I am in another world. That this world was my new reality.

And I made up my mind right there.

[I'll move through this other world with Fran by my side.]

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Hello, this is Tanaka Yuu.

To both new readers and the readers who read this when it was being published on the Internet, I thank you for picking up this book.

To those who have already bought this book on the Internet, please recommend it to your friends and acquaintances.

And to those who are currently reading this in a bookstore. Please take this to the register right away. Everything starts by taking it there!

This novel was adapted from a web novel on the site, 'Let's Become Novelists.'

When I first started writing it, I never imagined it would end up becoming a book.

And I even jokingly told my friends, "If it gets published, I'll put my signature on it."

I mean, the site's name is Let's Become Novelists, so I was aware that this might happen.

My dream since long ago was to become an author, and I once worked incredibly hard to try and become one.

The truth is, I once came very close to achieving that dream. Well, it didn't work out in the end.

It was then that I met Let's Become Novelists.

I thought that here my works could be read by a lot of people even without being published and be applauded for my work. My story probably won't become a book, but it should be a good place to polish my skills, right?

My first upload was that lighthearted.

At first, my reader count didn't grow at all so it was nothing more than a hobby.

I felt both delighted and depressed as the number of readers increased. And I would despair at every criticism.

And one day, when my reader count had risen to be in the top ranks, I began to ask myself the question, "What if..."

Thus, my long sought after book came out.

Though I don't yet have the confidence to shout out, "I'm an author!" I do have the confidence to continue this series.

Now, I am truly glad that I uploaded my works to Let's Become Novelists.

For last are my thanks.

To my editor from Micro Magazine who evaluated my dismal works and patiently edited it with me, I-san. I no longer sleep while facing the publishing company.

To my illustrator who drew the best, most adorable illustrations, Llo-sama. I was very nearly knocked out by how cute Fran was.

To the site that gave me the chance to publish this book, Let's Become Novelists.

To everyone who was involved in getting this book published.

And to all my readers who cheered for me from back when I was posting this book on the Internet.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

I hope to talk to you again in volume 2.

Thank you for reading this to the very end.



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